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Am S S Macom.

Profr

SCRIPTURAL INSTRUCTION.



Dayspring.



The deaf and dumb pupil.—p. 5.

THE
DAYSRING;

OR,

SIMPLE BIBLE INSTRUCTION

FOR

THE LEAST AND THE LOWEST.

17
"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding
unto the simple."

PSALM cxix. 130.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following pages were not originally intended for Publication. They were written for the instruction of a deaf and dumb child, in whose education it was necessary to employ the simplest form of language; and the object of the writer, therefore, was to convey, in such language, as much scriptural and religious knowledge as the pupil was capable of receiving.

It has been suggested, that, as this little history was found to interest the child for whom it was at first intended, it might possibly be made useful in other cases; either in the

instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, or among children in general. It is, therefore, now published, in the humble hope, that he, who not unfrequently condescends to employ the weakest instruments, may bless this feeble endeavour to lead the young to the knowledge of his Holy Word.

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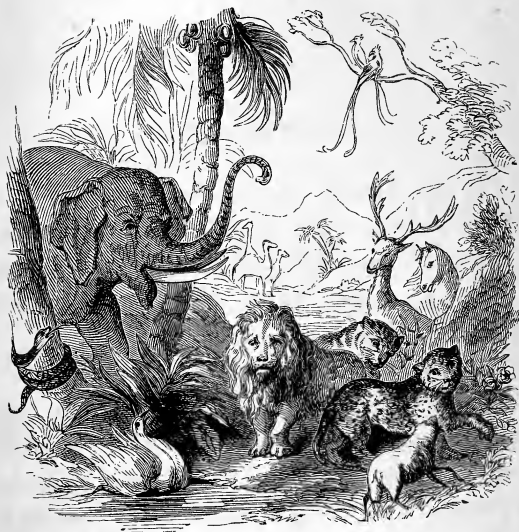
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THE FUTURE

Dayspring.



“God spake and created all things by his wonderful power.”—p. 13.

BIBLE HISTORY.

PART I.



CHAPTER I.

THE CREATION.

MANY, many years ago, there was no earth, nor plants, nor animals, nor sun, nor moon, nor people. All was darkness ; but God was. God is eternal. He had no beginning. He will have no end.

God spake, and created all things by his wonderful power. The first day, he created light ; the second day, the blue sky ; the third day, the seas, and dry land, and trees ; the fourth day, the sun, and moon, and stars ; the fifth day, the birds and fishes ; the sixth day, beasts, and insects, and creeping things, and man. Then all was finished, and “ God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.”

“The seventh day God ended his work which he had made.” God rested on that day, and therefore he commands us to rest on the sabbath-day. He says, “remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy.”

“The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” God gave to the animals beautiful and useful bodies; but to man he gave more: he gave him a soul also, which could never die. God gave wonderful instinct to the animals; but he gave reason to man, power to know, and to love, and to worship God. The man’s name was Adam. God created him holy and happy.

“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man.” The garden was full of beautiful trees and flowers; the little birds sang sweetly, and the animals all played together upon the green grass; they did not fight, nor hurt one another; all was love and happiness, because there was no sin.

“The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it.” But God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help

meet for him.” When Adam was asleep, God took a rib out of his side, and of it made a woman, and brought her to Adam, and she was his wife. Her name was Eve. She had a soul and reason like Adam, and was holy and happy as he was. God said to them, “Of every tree in the garden ye may eat; but of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which is in the midst of the garden, ye shall not eat, lest ye die.”

Adam and Eve loved one another, and they loved God. They walked in the beautiful garden, and sang praise to God, without pain, or sorrow, or fear; and they loved to hear God speak to them, and to learn the wonderful things he taught them.

CHAPTER II.

THE BEGINNING OF SIN.

THERE was a wicked angel named Satan. Once, he had been a bright and happy angel in heaven; but he was disobedient, and God drove him down into hell, and many other wicked angels with him. Sin cannot be in heaven. All must be holy there. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down into hell."

Satan hated Adam and Eve, because they were holy and happy, and he was wicked and miserable; and he went into the garden, and appeared like a serpent, and spoke to Eve, and tempted her to eat the fruit which God had forbidden. But Eve said, "God commanded us, saying, ye shall not eat of it, lest ye die." Then Satan told a lie, for he is a liar, and the father of it," and said, "You shall not surely die." And Eve believed Satan, and she took the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and did eat, and gave to Adam, and he ate. God saw all this, and he was very angry. Adam and Eve were sinners now. Their holiness and happiness were gone, and God would punish

them for their sin. "They heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves." Why did they fear? Because they knew they had sinned; they knew that God was angry with them. They were not glad now to hear his voice. They could not now sing his praises, and talk happily to him. But Adam and Eve could not hide themselves from God, for he can see everywhere. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

God called Adam, and said unto him, "Hast thou eaten of the fruit of which I commanded thee not to eat?" Adam did not humbly confess his sin, but answered, "The woman gave it to me, and I did eat." Then God said to Eve, "What is this that thou hast done?" and she answered, "The serpent tempted me, and I ate." Then God told Adam and Eve, that they had sinned, and therefore they must die. Thorns and thistles would now grow in the beautiful world; they must labour, and suffer pain and sorrow all the days they lived, and then "die, and return to the dust." Their bodies must die; but where must their souls go? *These* could

not die, because they were immortal: and they could not go to heaven, because they were sinful. Hell was the place for the wicked, where Satan and the wicked angels were. Must the souls of Adam and Eve, and all their children, go there? No—God did not wish his sinful creatures to perish.

God said, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. What did this mean? Satan was the serpent; Jesus Christ was the seed of the woman. In due time, Jesus would come into the world, and subdue Satan, and deliver all who should believe, from Satan's power, from sin and hell. If we have faith in Jesus, we shall be saved, as we hope Adam and Eve were, and made eternally happy when we die.

CHAPTER III.

CAIN AND ABEL.

BUT though God was willing to forgive Adam and Eve, he would not let them remain in the garden. An angel came with a flaming sword to drive them away. They were sinners, and therefore they must not stay there. Now, they felt pain and sorrow; and we shall now see the sad workings of sin in the beautiful world which God had made.

Cain, the eldest son of Adam and Eve, was very wicked; but his brother Abel loved and prayed to God, and believed in Jesus. Abel was a shepherd: and at God's command, he took a lamb, and killed it, and offered it up in sacrifice. Abel sacrificed the lamb in faith, and in obedience: and when he did so, he thought of Jesus Christ, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The lamb which Abel sacrificed could not take away sin; but he believed that Jesus Christ would come and die, like that lamb, and that his blood would take away sin.

Cain offered a sacrifice too, but not the right sort of sacrifice, such as God had undoubtedly

made known to him, that he wished him to offer. He brought the fruits of the earth, and gave them to God. But he did not confess his sins, nor ask for forgiveness, nor believe in Jesus Christ and his sacrifice for sin. So God accepted Abel, and his sacrifice; but Cain, and his sacrifice, he did not accept. But when Cain knew that God was angry, he did not ask God to forgive him, and change his heart; he was sullen and jealous, because God accepted his brother, and did not accept him. God said to Cain, "Why art thou angry? If thou doest well, shalt not thou also be accepted?" for God was willing to forgive Cain. But Cain would not attend to what God said; Satan was in his heart, tempting him to be angry and passionate, and Cain did not "resist the devil."

One day, Cain and Abel were together in the field. They were alone; Adam and Eve were not there; and Cain struck Abel, and killed him. Abel's body fell dead upon the ground; but his soul did not die; Cain could not hurt *that*: it went to heaven, to be there in happiness for ever. God saw Cain kill his brother, and asked, "Where is Abel?" and then wicked Cain committed another sin, and told a lie, and said, "I

know not.” But God had seen Abel die, and he punished Cain, and drove him away, far from his father and mother and brothers and sisters ; and he was a wanderer in the earth.

Adam and Eve were very sorry for their dear son Abel. When they looked on his dead body, they must have thought of their own sin, and of the punishment of sin : and how glad they must have been to remember God’s promise, that Jesus should come and die to save sinners. Adam lived to be more than 900 years old, and then he died. The bodies of Adam and Eve were buried ; but we may hope that their souls went to heaven. We may hope that God had forgiven them, for the sake of Jesus, because they had repented of their sins, and believed in Jesus Christ, and that they met Abel’s happy soul, in that blessed place where there is no sin, no pain, no sorrow.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DELUGE.

MANY people were in the world, and most of them were very wicked; but a holy man was among them, named Enoch. The Bible says, "Enoch walked with God;" what does this mean? It means that he took constant delight in thinking of God, and in loving and serving him at all times. God blessed Enoch, and was pleased to take him to heaven. "He was not, for God took him."

"God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth." And he said he would destroy the wicked people, and send a flood of water to wash them all away. But there was then another holy man, named Noah, and God promised to save him. God commanded Noah to make a great ark of wood. Noah did as God told him, and when the ark was finished, he went in, with his wife, and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and the wives of his sons, and many beasts and birds, and creeping things; and "the Lord shut him in."

The wicked people would not go into the ark; they laughed at Noah while he was build-

ing it, and would not believe him, when he told them that the water was soon coming to drown them all. God waited in mercy many years; for he did not wish them to perish. But they would not repent, nor believe, nor turn to God; and, at last, he sent rain from heaven, and water out of the sea, and destroyed the wicked people. "The rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights," and every thing in the earth died. Was Noah safe? Yes: the ark floated upon the waters. It did not sink, because God kept it up. God will keep safely all who, like Noah, love and serve him. He can keep them in every place. When they are asleep in the dark night, God sees them; when they walk about, he is with them; when they are in storms upon the great sea, he can keep them. He sends his holy angels to take care of them. His eye is always upon them. Those are happy people who have God near, to love and keep them wherever they are.

When the rain was over, the ark rested upon a mountain, called Ararat, and Noah looked out. All the ground was covered with water. There were no trees, nor flowers; they were withered and dead. There were no people, nor beasts,

nor birds; the water had drowned them all. Then Noah opened a window in the ark, and sent out a raven. The raven flew about, and did not return to Noah. Then Noah sent out a dove. But the dove flew back again, and Noah put out his hand, and pulled it into the ark. Seven days after, Noah sent out the dove again; and in the evening it returned, and brought in its beak an olive leaf. Noah was very glad to see this leaf; because he knew by it that now the trees were beginning to bud and grow, and that soon all would be pleasant again. So Noah thanked God, and waited patiently for seven more days; and then he sent out the dove again. All was dry now. The trees and flowers grew, and the sun shone brightly and pleasantly. The dove did not return any more to the ark. God gave it instinct to build its nest among the trees, and to find food for itself without Noah to take care of it.

Noah took the covering off the ark, and looked, and he saw that all was dry. Then God told him to come out, with his family, and all the living things that were with him. They were glad to see the dry ground again, and the sun, and trees, and flowers, so beautiful and

fresh. They were all well; for God had kept them safely in the ark from the wind and the waters. Then Noah and his family thanked God, and built an altar, and offered joyful sacrifices in faith, and prayed, and praised the Lord.

And God set a beautiful rainbow in the sky, and he told Noah, that when it should rain again upon the earth, and the clouds should be black and heavy, then the rainbow should be seen in the cloud, that people might know, that God would not again drown the world. The sun shining upon the little drops of water in the rain-cloud, makes the bow and its beautiful colours. God sends the rain, and the cloud, and the sunshine to make the bow, that we may remember his promise to Noah, never to drown the world again. But God sends rain from heaven, to make the grass and corn grow; to water the ground, and make the trees and flowers bud and blossom. God is very good and kind. "He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains; he giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry."

When Noah and his family came out of the ark, they went into different places, and built

houses: and they had many children, and the earth was soon full of people again. These people all spoke the same language. Many of them were very wicked. They sought to make themselves great, not to please God; and, in their pride, they said, "Let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad." But God was very angry with them, because they were proud, and forgot him. And he confounded their speech, and made them speak different languages; so that they could not understand one another, nor finish the city and tower. The place was named Babel, or confusion, and the wicked people were scattered abroad upon the face of the earth. See how God hates and punishes pride!

CHAPTER V.

ABRAM.

THERE was a man named Abram, who lived in Mesopotamia. The people there were idolaters, but Abram worshipped God. God told Abram to go away from his home, into the land of Canaan; and he promised to bless him, if he did so. Abram obeyed directly; he took his wife, and his nephew Lot, and all he possessed, and went to Canaan. This showed his faith and obedience; and God did as he promised, and brought Abram safely to Sichem, and then said to him, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." Abram then had no children; but still he believed God, and "built an altar to the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord."

Abram was very rich: he had silver, and gold, and asses, and camels, and servants. His nephew Lot was rich too, and there was not room in the land, for the possessions of both Lot and Abram; and their servants were unkind, and quarrelled with one another. Abram did not like to see this, for he wished all to be love and peace. So he asked Lot to separate from him, and to go to the place he liked best. Then Lot looked

towards Jordan. It was a beautiful place, like a sweet garden, and full of water. So Lot chose to go to the plain of Jordan, where there were several cities, and among them the city of Sodom ; because it was very pleasant, and there would be much food there for him, and for his cattle. Lot was very unwise. He thought too much of fertile land, and too little of the character of the people among whom he was to dwell.

Abram and Lot parted, and Lot went to live near Sodom. But Lot was not happy there. The people were very wicked, and he was vexed, because they would not love and worship God, as he wished to do. And now Lot was punished for his sin in going among wicked people, and choosing a home in a place where God was not obeyed. We should try to be with those who love the Lord, and who will help us to do right. Riches and possessions cannot make us happy ; the love of God alone can give us peace and comfort. And God blessed Abram, and said to him again, "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy children." Then Abram went to Hebron, and dwelt there, and built an altar to the Lord.

CHAPTER. VI.

MELCHIZEDEK.

SOON after Lot went to live in Sodom, a great king named Chedorlaomer, and other kings with him, came, and fought against the city and people of Sodom. Chedorlaomer conquered the king of Sodom, and took away all the riches of the city, and made many of the people prisoners, and Lot was made prisoner among them. See how vain and foolish it is to love and trust in riches and worldly things! Lot went to Sodom, hoping to enjoy all his great possessions: now, he had lost every thing, and was made prisoner himself.

When Abram heard what had happened to Lot, he armed himself, and his servants, and pursued the army of Chedorlaomer, and smote them, and brought back all the people and goods that Chedorlaomer had taken, and delivered Lot; and Lot returned in safety to Sodom. The king of Sodom offered to give great riches to Abram; but Abram would not take any reward; for he wished only to show kindness to others, not to enrich himself. Let us try to imitate Abram, and to be kind and generous as he was. The Bible

says, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

When Abram returned, the king of Salem, whose name was Melchizedek, came out to meet him, and gave bread and wine to him and his servants, to refresh them. Melchizedek was a priest as well as a king, and he blessed Abram, and said, "Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hands." Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth part of all the riches that had been taken, to show how much he honoured and respected him.

We read no more of the history of Melchizedek; but the Bible teaches us, that he is to remind us of another and greater king and priest—of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Melchizedek was a type, a likeness, of Jesus. Jesus is a king; he reigns in the hearts of his people now; he will reign over all the world hereafter. And he is a priest too; he has offered up the sacrifice of himself, to take away our sins, and he ever lives in heaven, to make intercession for us there. Then let us honour Jesus, as Abram honoured Melchizedek, and give all we can to him and to his service.

CHAPTER VII.

ABRAM'S VISION.

AND now the Lord spoke to Abram again in a vision, to comfort and encourage him. God promised to do great and wonderful things for him at some future time, but not yet; for he was pleased first to try Abram's faith and patience. One night, God brought him out into the fields, and told him to look upwards. The stars were shining brightly in the sky, and God told Abram to try to count them; but there were more, many more, than Abram could number. Then God said, "So shall thy seed be." Abram had yet no children, but he believed God still. He felt sure, that the Lord could and would do as he promised. This is an example of faith for us. God speaks to us in the Bible, and all he says, we are to believe. And those who truly believe, will be blessed with faithful Abram.

God promised Abram, that he should inherit the land of Canaan; and he told him what would happen to his children, when he himself was dead. God commanded Abram, to take several

animals, and to divide them in pieces, and offer them in sacrifice, and when the birds came to devour the dead bodies of these animals, Abram drove them away. That same night, God spoke to Abram again, and told him, that his children should go into a strange land, and be afflicted there; but that after four hundred years, they should come out of that land, with great riches, and possess all the country of Canaan. And when it was dark, Abram saw, in vision, a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp, which passed between the pieces of the sacrifice which he had offered at God's command.

What was the meaning of this? Perhaps the vision was meant to teach Abram, what should happen to his children, in that strange land to which they were going. The smoking furnace might teach him that they would be afflicted; and the bright lamp might teach him that they would also be comforted. God often afflicts his people, but he always comforts them too; and so, as we shall soon see, he afflicted and comforted Abram's children, the people of Israel, in the land of Egypt.

CHAPTER VIII.

HAGAR.

SARAI, the wife of Abram, had a maid named Hagar, who was also Abram's wife. Hagar behaved disrespectfully to her mistress, and this made Sarai angry, and she treated Hagar very harshly, and was so unkind to her, that Hagar ran away from her mistress, and fled into the wilderness. All this was very sad, and very wrong. It was wrong in Hagar to be disrespectful to her mistress; and it was wrong in Sarai to be unkind to her servant; and Abram himself was wrong in allowing these things to happen in his family. We read in the Bible, that servants are to be obedient to those who rule over them; and that masters and mistresses are to be kind to their servants, "forbearing threatening." Those cannot be happy families that forget this.

But what became of Hagar? The angel of the Lord found her in the wilderness, by a well of water, and said to her, "Hagar, whence comest thou?" And Hagar answered, "I flee from my mistress Sarai," Then the angel told Hagar to return to her mistress, and to submit

to her. This was Hagar's duty, and she could not be blessed nor happy while she forgot this duty, and gave way to her own pride and self-will. But the angel comforted Hagar, though he reproved her, and told her that she would soon have a son, who would be the father of a very great nation. That son was to be named Ishmael, which means "God shall hear," because God had heard the affliction of Hagar, and had mercy on her. And the angel said, that Ishmael should be a wild man; and that his hand would be against every man, and every man's hand against him. Ishmael was born not long after, and from him descended the nations of the Arabians, who have always been a wild people, as the angel foretold.

So Hagar was comforted; and she did as she was commanded, and returned to Sarai. But first, she gave a name to the angel who had appeared to her. She called him, "Thou God seest me." God saw Hagar in her affliction, and he can still see us in all our sorrows, and bless and comfort us, as he did her, if we pray to him, and trust in him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COVENANT.

AFTER this, the Lord appeared to Abram, and again promised to bless and multiply him, and give him the land of Canaan for a possession. And God changed his name, and called him Abraham, which means the father of a multitude, because many people should descend from him. And Sarai's name also was changed to Sarah, which means a princess. Then the Lord appointed a sign in Abraham's family, to mark them as a distinct people; this sign was the circumcision of every son who should be born in the family of Abraham.

Were the children of Ishmael to possess the land of Canaan? No; Ishmael was not the promised seed who should inherit Canaan; but God told Abraham, that Sarah should have a son who should be called Isaac, and that he would make with him, and with his children, an everlasting covenant. What is a covenant? An agreement and promise between two parties. The promise which God made to Noah, never to drown the world again, was a covenant; and

the sign of it was the rainbow. And now, the promise God made to Abraham, to bless his seed, and to give them the land of Canaan, was a covenant ; and the sign of it was circumcision. And God had made another covenant with Adam in the garden of Eden, when he promised that Jesus Christ should come into the world, and die to save sinners. This was the greatest covenant of all. And we know that every one of God's covenants is true, because made by him who cannot lie, and who will never deceive his people.



CHAPTER X.

THE ANGELS' VISIT.

ONE day, Abraham was sitting at his tent door, and he looked up, and saw three men standing by him. Then he rose up directly, and bowed respectfully to them, and asked, "Let now water be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest under the tree, and I will bring you food." So the men sat down, and Abraham ran into the tent, to his wife Sarah, and told her to make cakes very quickly ; then he ran to the field, and

took a calf, and killed it, and dressed it; and he brought the calf, and the cakes, and butter, and milk, and gave them to the men under the tree; and they did eat, and Abraham stood, and waited upon them. He was right to be kind and respectful: The Bible tells us to "use hospitality one to another;" and St. Paul says, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers."

Abraham did not know the three men. Who were they? One was probably the Lord Jesus Christ, who appeared in the form of a man, but was in some way distinguished from the others; and two were holy angels sent by God from heaven. When the men had finished eating, they asked, "Where is Sarah?" And Abraham said, "She is in the tent." Then the Lord told Abraham, he would soon give to him and Sarah a son: for God had not forgotten his promise made to Abraham so many years before. Sarah heard what was said, but she did not believe it, and she laughed, and thought it could not be true. Then the Lord said, "Why did Sarah laugh? Is anything too hard for the Lord? Sarah shall have a son." Sarah was afraid, and denied, and said, "I laughed not;" but he said, "Nay, but thou didst laugh." So

the men went away, and Abraham went with them towards Sodom. And then the Lord told Abraham, that he was angry with those two wicked cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, and was come now to destroy them. Then the two angels went on to Sodom, but the Lord stayed, and talked with Abraham.

Abraham thought of his nephew Lot, who was still in Sodom, and he felt afraid, and very sorry for him, and for the dreadful doom of the other inhabitants. So he asked the Lord to spare the city, if fifty righteous people were there; and the Lord said, he would. But soon, Abraham thought, that Sodom was so very wicked, that perhaps there were not fifty there who loved God; and he prayed the Lord again, five times, if there were forty-five, or forty, or thirty, or twenty, or only ten righteous people in Sodom, to save the city. And the Lord said, "If I find in Sodom ten righteous, I will not destroy it." Then the Lord went away, and Abraham returned unto his place.

It was right and kind in Abraham, thus to pray for Sodom, and especially, as Lot was there. We should all remember our friends in

prayer, and ask God to take care of them. And when they are unhappy, or in danger, we should particularly pray God to comfort them, and to keep them from evil. Pray one for another. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.



CHAPTER XI.

SODOM DESTROYED.

IT was evening when the two angels came to Sodom. Did they find there ten righteous people? No; there were not ten righteous in Sodom; and therefore it could not be saved. But the Lord remembered Abraham's prayer: and he remembered righteous Lot, who loved God all alone in the wicked city, and sent the angels to save him.

Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom; as he had now become an inhabitant of the city; and when he saw the angels, he rose, and bowed respectfully, and brought them to his house, and gave them food. Then they said, "Whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring out; for we will destroy this place." So Lot went out, and

spoke to his sons-in-law, and said, "Get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city." But they would not believe what he said. And when the morning was come, the angels hastened Lot, and said, "Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here;" and while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful unto him, and they brought him forth. Then they said, "Escape for thy life to the mountain; stay not; look not behind thee." But Lot said, "I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me. There is a little city near to flee unto, let me escape thither." And God mercifully allowed Lot to go to that little city. It was called Zoar.

So Lot, and his wife, and his two daughters, escaped from Sodom; and then "the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." All the cities were destroyed excepting Zoar, and all the people died. Lot was saved, with his two daughters; but "his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."

In the morning, Abraham rose very early, and

went to look towards Sodom. No beautiful city was there now; it was all black with smoke; the houses destroyed, the people killed. But God had remembered Abraham's prayer for Lot, and kept him safely. But Lot had no house to live in; no riches, no possessions; he lived in a cave, with his two daughters, and was thankful to be even there. Sin is a very sad thing: it makes God angry, and he must punish it. He punished the people of Sodom with fire from heaven; and he still says he must punish the wicked: they "shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. But "The Lord preserveth all them that love him," as we may believe Lot did; he will give them all that is really needful for them on earth; and when they die, he will take them to heaven, to be happy with him forever.

CHAPTER XII.

ISAAC.

Soon after this, Isaac, the child of promise, was born. Ishmael, the son of Hagar, was now almost grown up, and he behaved very unkindly to his little brother Isaac, mocking him in his play. This was very wrong, and it grieved and displeased Abraham and Sarah; and Sarah said, "Cast out the bond-woman and her son." And God commanded Abraham to do this; so he rose in the morning, and called Hagar, and gave her a bottle of water, and bread, and her son Ishmael, and sent them both away. This would have been very wrong in Abraham, had not God told him to do it, but Abraham had such faith in God, that he knew the child and Hagar would be as safe as in his own tent. They went into the wilderness of Beersheba. The water in the bottle was soon spent; it was very hot, and Ishmael fainted, and his mother cast him under a bush, and she sat by herself, and wept. But God heard Ishmael cry, and an angel called to Hagar from heaven, and said, "Hagar, fear not; God hath heard

the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand." Then God showed Hagar a "well of water, and she went, and filled her bottle with water, and gave the lad drink." And God was with Ishmael, and made him well, and he grew up, and he became a great prince, and lived in the wilderness. Afterwards, he had many children, and they became a great people, as the angel had foretold.

God can take care of us wherever we are ; he can keep us when we are ill, and make us well and strong again. When we are in sorrow, we should pray to God, and he will hear us ; and if we have done wrong, like Hagar and Ishmael, we must pray for pardon, and ask to be made humble and gentle and holy. All our hearts are full of anger, and disobedience, and pride ; but God will give us the Holy Spirit, if we ask him, to make us gentle and obedient and humble.

After Hagar and Ishmael were gone away, God called to Abraham, and said, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, and offer him for a burnt offering, upon a mountain which I will shew thee." Did God wish to make Abraham unhappy, and to kill his son ? No, God only

wished to show Abraham's faith. Abraham obeyed directly; for he knew God's command must be right, and he believed that God had power even to raise Isaac to life again after he was dead. All God does is good and right. When he sends us pain or sickness, or sorrow, he does it wisely, for good, not for evil; we cannot know why, but God knows; let us ask him to make us as obedient to his will as Abraham was.

Abraham arose in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two servants with him, and Isaac, and wood for the burnt offering, and went to the place God shewed him. As they walked along, and Abraham thought what he was to do to his dear son, this good, obedient child, he must have felt very sad; but Abraham loved God more than he loved Isaac; and God gave him strength willingly to obey his command. After three days, they saw afar off the mountain where Isaac was to be offered. Then Abraham said to his servants, "Stay here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder, and worship, and come again to you." So the servants stayed, and Abraham and his son went towards the mountain.

As they walked along, Isaac said, "My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" For Isaac did not yet know that he was to be the lamb. Abraham said, "God will provide a lamb, my son." So they went on, and came to the place which God had told Abraham of. And then, Abraham built the altar, and put the wood upon it, and bound Isaac, and laid him upon the altar, and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham, out of heaven, and said, "Lay not thy hand upon the lad; for now I know that thou fearest God, because thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from him." Then Abraham looked, and saw a ram, caught in a bush by the horns, and he offered the ram for a burnt offering, instead of Isaac. And the angel called again to Abraham, and said, "Because thou hast done this thing, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee; and all nations shall be blessed in thy seed."

The Lord Jesus Christ was the seed of Abraham, who came to save sinners, to be a blessing to all people. "God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Abraham gave his son to God; God gave his son for us; the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." God has given to us far, far more than Abraham could give to God by sacrificing his son Isaac. How should we love God who has so loved us! "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

CHAPTER XIII.

ISAAC'S FAMILY.

SARAH was now one hundred and twenty-seven years old, and she died in Hebron, and Abraham and Isaac wept for her. Abraham bought the field of Machpelah, where there was a cave, for a burying place; and there he laid the body of Sarah. But Sarah's soul did not die; it went to heaven, to be with God forever. It is very sad to see our dear friends die, and to see their bodies put into the coffin, and laid in the tomb; but if they loved God, as we may believe Sarah did, then we know their souls are gone to heaven, to be safe and happy there; and if we

too love God, we shall go to meet them when we die, and never part from them again. This thought comforted Abraham.

Abraham had a good and faithful servant named Eliezer, who had lived with him and Sarah and Isaac, many years. Abraham called Eliezer, and said, "Go now to Mesopotamia, where I used to live, and find there a wife for my son Isaac, and bring her here," Abraham did not wish his son to marry one of the women of Canaan, because they were idolaters. Eliezer obeyed; he took ten of his master's camels, and went away to Mesopotamia. When he came there, it was evening; and he was tired, and sat down by a well. He did not know the people who lived there, nor whom to choose for a wife for Isaac; but he prayed to God to direct him, and God heard his prayer. He soon saw a young woman coming to the well. She carried a pitcher, and she went, and filled her pitcher with water out of the well. The servant asked her to give him some water; and she was very kind, and gave him the pitcher, and then she gave water to the camels. Eliezer had asked God to show him, by this sign, the wife whom he was to take for Isaac, and now he felt

quite sure that this was the right person; so he took two bracelets, and put them upon her hand and gave her a gold earring, and asked, "Whose daughter art thou?" She told him her name was Rebekah, and her father was Bethuel, a relation of Abraham. Then Eliezer went home, and staid with Bethuel and his family. And he asked if Rebekah might go to Hebron, and marry Isaac; and they were willing she should go, for they believed it was God's will. So Rebekah left her father, and mother, and brothers, and sisters; and went with her nurse and her maids, upon camels, with Eliezer, to Hebron. And then Eliezer told Isaac all about Rebekah; and how God had answered his prayer; and Isaac loved her, and she became his wife; and God blessed them.

Abraham was now a very old man, one hundred and seventy-five years old. He died, and his sons Isaac and Ishmael laid his body by Sarah, in the cave in the field of Machpelah, and his happy soul went to God whom he loved, and to Jesus Christ in whom he believed.

God gave two sons to Isaac and Rebekah. Their names were Esau and Jacob. When they grew up, Esau, was fond of hunting in the field,

but Jacob was very quiet, and liked to stay in his tent. One day, when Esau had been hunting, he came home very hot, and tired, and hungry. Jacob was eating pottage in the tent, and his brother said to him, "Give me pottage, for I am faint." Jacob said, "Sell me thy birthright;" and Esau sold his birthright for the pottage, and Jacob gave him the food he wanted, and Esau went away. But God was not pleased with Esau: he had done what was wrong. He was the eldest son of his father, and it was his privilege and duty to offer sacrifices, as a priest in his family; this was his birthright. But Esau did not love holy things; he did not believe in Jesus, who should come and be a sacrifice to take away the sin of the world. He thought, Jacob might attend to these things, but, he cared only for the pottage; and for that he was willing to lose his birthright.

It is very sad, and very wicked, to despise holy things, as Esau did; to care more for our bodies than our souls; to think more about what we shall eat and drink, than about what we must do to be saved. Jesus says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

It was not right for Jacob to take advantage of Esau's hunger, to buy his birthright. He should have been willing to divide his food with Esau without any pay.

Isaac was now a very old man: he could not see; his eyes were dim with age. But God was with Isaac; he did not forget him. God will keep his people all their lives; when they are young, and when they grow old, and when they die, he will be with them, and bring them safely to heaven. He says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

CHAPTER XIV.

JACOB AND ESAU.

ISAAC felt he must now soon die, and he called Esau, and said to him, "Go now, and bring me savoury meat, that I may eat it, and bless thee, before I die." Esau obeyed: he took his bow and arrow, and went into the field to hunt for venison. When Rebekah heard Isaac speak to Esau, she was not pleased, because she wished Isaac to bless Jacob, for God had said Jacob should be greater than Esau. So she called

Dayspring.



Jacob and Esau.—p. 50.

Jacob, and said, "Esau is now gone to hunt for venison, that his father may eat, and bless him. Now obey me, and go, and kill two kids, and I will make savoury meat, and thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat and bless thee." But Jacob said, "I know my father cannot see, but he can feel. Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man; and if my father feel me, he will know I am Jacob, and not Esau, and I shall seem to him a deceiver, and bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. But Rebekah told Jacob to go and bring the kids quickly, and he obeyed, and went. It is right for children to obey their parents when the parents tell them to do right, but not when they tell them to do wrong. We must obey God more than man, or woman, or father, or mother. Jacob knew it was wicked to try to deceive his poor blind father, and he ought to have told his mother so, respectfully and meekly. Jacob and his mother both displeased God then.

Rebekah took the kids which Jacob brought, and made savoury meat, such as his father loved, and then she took Esau's clothes, and put them upon Jacob; and she put the hairy skins of the kids upon his neck and hands,

that he might feel rough like Esau, and sent him with the meat to his father. So Jacob came in, and said, "My father, here is the venison; rise, eat, and bless me." But Isaac asked, "How didst thou find it so quickly, my son?" Then Jacob told a lie, and said, "Because the Lord brought it to me." Isaac told his son to come near to him: and he felt him, and asked, "Art thou my very son Esau? The voice is like Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." Then Jacob again told a lie, and said, "Yes, I am Esau, thy eldest son, Esau." Isaac now believed him, and he called him near, and ate the meat, and drank the wine which Jacob gave him. Then he blessed and kissed his deceitful son, and told him what should happen in a future time; for God taught Isaac to prophesy. He said, "The Lord bless thee, and give thee plenty of corn and wine; let people serve thee, and be Lord over thy brethren." All this was fulfilled, when the Israelites, Jacob's children, afterwards possessed the fruitful land of Canaan, and became a powerful people.

Was Jacob happy when his father blessed

him? No, for he knew he was doing wrong; deceitful people cannot be happy. God's eye is upon them: they may deceive man, as Jacob deceived Isaac, but they cannot deceive God. He hates liars. "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord."

Isaac finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob went away. Esau was now come home, and he brought the venison to Isaac; for he did not know what his brother had done. When Esau asked his father to bless him, Isaac wondered very much, and said, "Who art thou?" and Esau answered, "I am thine eldest son, Esau." Then Isaac trembled, and asked again, "Who? Who was he that came, and brought me venison, and I ate, and blessed him before thou camest? yes, and he shall be blessed." When Esau heard this, he cried, and said, "O bless me, even me also, O my father;" and Esau wept. But Isaac told him, that though God would give Esau many blessings, yet Jacob would be greater than he; and this made Esau very angry, and he thought, "My father will die soon, and then I will slay my brother Jacob." When Rebekah knew that Esau hated Jacob, and wish-

ed to kill him, she called her younger son, and said, "Go now to Haran, where my brother Laban lives, thy uncle; and stay there a few days, till Esau's anger is turned away, and then I will send, and fetch thee." So Isaac and Rebekah blessed Jacob, and prayed God to keep him safely, and sent him away to Padan-aram. Rebekah never saw Jacob again, and was thus justly punished for contriving the deception, on account of which Jacob was obliged to leave home.

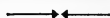
Poor Jacob! He had now no happy home to live in; no quiet bed to lie in at night, when he was tired. Why? Because Jacob had sinned, and God must punish him. Sinners cannot be happy. But God did not forsake Jacob; for he remembered his faithful servants, Abraham and Isaac, Jacob's fathers; and his own covenant and promise to bless their children.

It was night. Jacob was weary, and he lay down on the cold ground, and put hard stones under his head for a pillow, and soon fell asleep. And God gave him a beautiful dream when he was asleep. He saw a ladder set on the earth, and its top reached to heaven,

and holy angels were going up and down upon it. Above it stood the Lord, and he spoke to Jacob. He said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac. I will give the land where thou liest, to thy children, for a possession." And then the Lord told Jacob, that a Saviour should come into the world, who would be a blessing to all people, and he said, "I am with thee, and I will keep thee in all places, and bring thee again into this land." How thankful Jacob was to hear the Lord speak to him so kindly, when he had been so forgetful, and so unthankful to God! God's eye is always upon us, when we sleep, and when we wake. He always remembers us, though we very often forget him, as Jacob did. Let us think of him, and love him more.

When Jacob awoke, he said, "God is in this place, and I knew it not;" and he was afraid and said, "How dreadful is this place! This is the house of God, and the gate of heaven!" Then he took the stone, and put it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon it, which was the custom of ancient times, when any thing, or person, was set apart as peculiarly

sacred ; for he wished the place to be remembered as holy ground ; and he called the name of it Bethel, or the house of God, because God appeared to him there.



CHAPTER XV.

JACOB WITH LABAN.

BEFORE Jacob went away from Bethel, he prayed to God, and asked him to keep him, and be with him, wherever he went ; and to give him bread to eat, and clothes to put on ; and to bring him again to his father's house. And then Jacob said, "The Lord shall be my God." He felt now, that God alone could make him happy, and he really wished to love and obey God with all his heart. Jacob must have been very sorry for his past sins, his wicked lies and deceit ; and he doubtless prayed for the pardon of them all ; when God had forgiven him, and blessed him, then Jacob was happy. He went on, and came to Padan-aram. He saw a field, and a well, and flocks of sheep, and shepherds by it. The shepherds rolled away the stone from the well's mouth,

and watered the sheep, and put the stone back again, to keep the water safely. Then Jacob asked the men, "Do you know Laban? Is he well?" And they said, "Yes, we know him: he is well, and his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep." Rachel was a cousin of Jacob, and he was very glad to see her, and told her his name. And Jacob wept when he saw her. Rachel told her father Laban, that Jacob was come; and Laban went to meet him, and brought him home, and asked him to stay in his house. Jacob lived many years with Laban, and kept his sheep; and after some time, he married his cousins Leah and Rachel whom he loved very much. And God blessed Jacob, and gave him many children, and great possessions, of sheep, and oxen, and goats and camels. But when Laban saw that Jacob had more cattle than he had, he was angry and jealous, and looked unkindly at Jacob. But God would not let Laban do anything to hurt Jacob, for he remembered his promise at Bethel, "I will be with thee." And so God told Jacob to go away from Laban, and to return to Canaan. Then Jacob called his family, and put them upon camels,

and took all his cattle, and his possessions, and went away secretly. Three days after, Laban heard that he was gone, and he ran after Jacob, and overtook him in Mount Gilead. But in the night, God came to Laban, and told him not to hurt Jacob. So they made a covenant, and promised to be kind one to the other, and then they parted. "In the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them; and Laban departed, and returned unto his place."

When Laban was gone, Jacob went on towards Canaan, and as he went, he saw some angels coming to meet him. They were sent by God to comfort Jacob, and to tell him that God was there, to bless and keep him. Jacob and his family were now near Seir, where his brother Esau lived. So Jacob sent servants before, to tell Esau, that he had lived many years with Laban, and was now coming home, and that he was very rich, and had many oxen, and asses, and camels, and servants, and he very humbly begged Esau to be kind and friendly to him. But when the servants came back to Jacob, they said, "Esau is coming to meet thee, and

four hundred men with him." Then Jacob was very much afraid, for he thought, that perhaps Esau was still angry with him, and was coming to kill him and all his family. So he divided the people who were with him, and prepared to meet Esau. He took goats, and sheep, and oxen, and camels, and told a servant to stand by them, and to say when Esau came, "Thy servant Jacob gives these to my lord Esau." It was very right of Jacob to behave humbly to Esau, and very wise of him too, thus to try to subdue Esau's anger by kindness. But after all, Jacob knew he had no power to help and save himself; only God could save him, so he went and prayed to him. And when we are sorry and afraid, we should do the same, and God promises to hear us; he says, "Call upon me in the time of trouble, and I will deliver thee."

God heard Jacob's prayer. In the night, when Jacob was alone, a man came to him, and wrestled with him. Who was he? Not an enemy; not a poor, weak, sinful man who had no power to help him: it was, we suppose, the Lord Jesus Christ, who appeared many years before to Abraham. Jacob knew who he

was, and he asked for a blessing from him. And the Lord blessed Jacob, and gave him the new name of Israel, which means a prince with God. And Jacob called the place, Peniel, or the face of God, because he had there seen God face to face. Jacob felt now peaceful and happy, and when he saw Esau coming, he had no fear. He went to meet him, and bowed to the ground seven times. And he had now no need to fear; for God had subdued Esau's anger, in answer to Jacob's prayer. "Esau ran, and fell on Jacob's neck, and kissed him." They both wept; for they thought of their past hatred, and unkindness to one another; but now they wished to live in peace and brotherly love. Jacob's family all came, and bowed respectfully to Esau; and Jacob gave Esau the camels, and goats, and oxen. Esau refused to take them at first, but Jacob urged him, so he took them. This was a happy end to all their anger and disputings. Let us learn from it "how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity."

CHAPTER. XVI.

JACOB AT BETHEL.

BUT Esau and Jacob could not stay long together. Jacob went on his journey, and Esau returned to Seir. They parted very affectionately; and then Jacob went to Shechem, and staid there. And now Jacob had new troubles. His family soon forgot God, and began to worship idols; and his sons were disobedient, and passionate, and cruel. But God said to Jacob, "Go now to Bethel, and make an altar there unto God." It was at Bethel that Jacob saw the ladder, many years before, when God promised to keep him, and to be with him wherever he went; and God had not forgotten his promise, though Jacob had forgotten Bethel. God always remembers his people, but they are often ungrateful, and do not remember him.

Jacob obeyed God directly. He told his family to bring to him all their foolish idols; and he talked to them about God, and told them they must not again make him angry, by worshipping gods which could not help

nor save them; and he took away these idols, and hid them under a tree in Shechem. Then they all went to Bethel; and there Jacob built an altar, and praised his God who had taken care of him so many years. God came to Jacob, and blessed him in Bethel. He called him by his new name, Israel; and told him again, that his children after him should possess the land of Canaan.

Soon after this, death came into Jacob's family. First, Deborah died, Rebekah's nurse, and was buried under an oak at Bethel. And then, when they came to Ephrath, Rachel too died, and was buried there. The poor body was laid in the tomb; and Jacob set a pillar upon her grave; but we may hope her soul went to heaven, where is no more death. She left a little baby named Benjamin. How sad it is when little children lose their parents, and are left orphans! but God can take care of them, and love them better than father or mother can, and he kept poor little Benjamin safely in his father's house. Children who lose their parents and friends, will have God for their Father, if they ask him to take care of them; and he will never leave

them; when their father and mother forsake them, then the Lord will take them up.

Jacob and his family went on now to Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac had lived so many years, Jacob's old home. Were his father and mother there now? Not Rebekah, she was dead; Jacob never saw his mother again. But Isaac was alive; he was now one hundred and eighty years old. Jacob was glad to see his father once more, and to have his forgiveness, and his blessing: and old Isaac must have rejoiced to know, that Jacob was now a better man; that he loved God with all his heart, and that his past sins had been repented of, and forgiven. Isaac soon after died, and his happy soul went to heaven. Then Esau came to see Isaac for the last time; and he and Jacob wept together over their father, and buried him. Esau and Jacob loved one another now; but they could not live together, because, like Abraham and Lot, they were both very rich, and there was not room for all their cattle. So Esau went again to mount Seir, or Edom, where he lived like a king, and had great possessions, and became very powerful. But Jacob staid in Canaan,

where his fathers Abraham and Isaac had lived, in the land which God had promised to give to them, and to their children.

If God is pleased to give us riches and possessions in this world, we must be thankful for them, and use them to his glory. If we have money, we ought to be glad to give to the poor, and not keep all for ourselves. It is very sad and very wrong, in rich people, to be selfish. But if God makes us poor, then we must not murmur, nor be discontented: we must not wish for more, nor covet the possessions of the rich. And whether rich or poor, we should ask God to give us a possession above, in heaven. Heaven is a better place than Canaan was, and it will be an everlasting possession. Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, could not live in Canaan for ever: they died, and left it; but all who go to heaven, will stay there for ever, and never, never go away.

Jacob was now an old man: he had known much sorrow in past years; Esau's hatred; Laban's unkindness; his fear that his brother would come and hurt him; his long journeys far from his home and parents; the death of

his wife, and his father; Jacob remembered all these troubles. But then he remembered, too, how merciful God had been to him; how he had kept him all his life; and delivered him from all evil; and Jacob felt he could love God, and trust him forever. God will not forget his people, even when they are old and helpless. He says, "To hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; I will carry, and will deliver you."



CHAPTER XVII.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

JACOB had twelve sons:—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, and Zebulon, who were grown up: Joseph, who was seventeen years old, and little Benjamin. The ten eldest were wicked men, but Joseph feared God: and Jacob loved him more than the others, and he gave him a coat of many colours. The ten brothers were jealous, when they saw their father loved Joseph so much, and they hated Joseph, and

were very unkind to him. But God was with Joseph, to love and keep him.

One night, God sent a wonderful dream to Joseph. He thought he was binding sheaves of corn in the field with his brothers; and the sheaves of his brothers arose, and stood up, and bowed before Joseph's sheaf. God told Joseph, by this dream, that his brothers should obey him, and that he should rule over them; but they were very angry, when he told them his dream. Soon after, he dreamed again, and saw the sun, and moon, and eleven stars bow before him. Joseph told this dream to his father, and his brothers: Jacob understood the meaning of the dream, and thought much about it; but the brothers only envied him still more.

Jacob's sons were shepherds, and took care of their father's flocks: and the ten eldest went to feed the sheep in Shechem; but Joseph and little Benjamin were with Jacob. One day, Israel called Joseph, and said, "Go now, and see if thy brethren are well, and if the flocks are well, and bring me word again." Joseph obeyed directly; perhaps he felt at first almost afraid to go to his wicked, unkind brothers; but then he remembered, that it

was right to obey his father, and he knew God could keep him safely. So Joseph went away from Hebron, and came to Shechem; but his brothers were not there, and he was told that they were gone to Dothan. Then Joseph went on to Dothan, and there he found them. And now some of these wicked men said, when they saw him afar off, "Here comes the dreamer: now let us slay him, and cast him into a pit, and say an evil beast has devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams." But Reuben said, "Let us not kill him, but cast him into this pit;" for Reuben was less cruel, and thought he could then take him out, and bring him home safely to his father. So when Joseph came to them, his cruel brothers seized him, and tore off his coat of many colours, and threw him into the pit; the pit was empty, there was no water in it; and then they sat down, and ate bread.

How dreadful to be so jealous, and selfish, and cruel! But remember, all our hearts are hard, like the hearts of Joseph's brothers, till the Holy Spirit puts better and kinder thoughts into them. We may not all be as cruel as they were, but we may have other sins quite as

hateful in the sight of God, and he only can make us good. Then let us pray God to make the fruits of the Spirit grow in us ; “ Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness.”

While these wicked, cruel brothers were eating, they looked up, and saw a great many people coming towards them. The people were Ishmaelites, children of Ishmael, the son of Hagar. They came from Gilead ; and they had camels, which carried the spices they were going to take into Egypt. When Judah saw the Ishmaelites, he persuaded his brothers to sell Joseph to them, so Joseph was taken out of the pit, and sold for twenty pieces of silver ; and the Ishmaelites took him, and brought him to Egypt, and there they sold him again to a man named Potiphar. Reuben was not with his brothers when Joseph was sold ; and when he came back to the pit and did not find him, he rent his clothes, and ran to his brothers, and said, “ The child is not ; and I, whither shall I go ? ” But they cared nothing for Reuben’s sorrow. They killed a kid, and dipped Joseph’s coat of many colours in the blood ; and then they went home, and showed the coat to their father, and said, “ This have

we found ; know now if it be thy son's coat or not." Jacob remembered the coat directly ; and he said, "It is my son's coat ; an evil beast hath devoured him ; Joseph is, without doubt, rent in pieces." And then Jacob wept, and rent his clothes, and refused to be comforted. We read that, many years before, Jacob deceived his father Isaac ; now Jacob's children deceived him. God does not forget sin ; he had forgiven Jacob ; but Jacob suffered for his wicked deceit all his life, to teach him what an evil thing sin is !

Poor Joseph ! He had now no father, no mother, no friend : but he early learned to know, and love, and serve the Lord ; and now, when he had no earthly friend to teach him, he asked God to keep him from sin, and to help him to do right, and God heard his prayer. And God still loves young people who love him. He says, "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." He was the father and guide of Joseph, when he was alone and a stranger in the land of Egypt. And so he will be of every child who will cry to him, "My Father, thou art the guide of my youth."

CHAPTER XVIII.

JOSEPH IN PRISON.

JOSEPH was a good and industrious servant to Potiphar; he was not idle, nor deceitful, nor disrespectful, nor dishonest; and he was very careful of his master's things; and God blessed him, and made him a blessing to Potiphar, and all his family. Young servants should try to be like Joseph in his master's house; as humble and obedient as he; attending to business, and serving God with all his heart: "not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

Potiphar's wife was a very wicked woman; she hated Joseph, and told her husband many things about him that were not true; and asked his master to punish him. Potiphar believed all she said, and he was very angry, and commanded Joseph to be put into prison. Potiphar did not know that Joseph had not done wrong; but God knew all the truth, for he cannot be deceived.

Joseph went to prison; but God was with him there. He can keep his people wherever

they are, and comfort them in all their sorrows; and he blessed Joseph, and made the keeper of the prison love him. Joseph took care of every thing in the prison, and of all the prisoners; and he was so kind and gentle, that they loved him, and told him all their sorrows. Joseph could tell them much about God which they did not know; and perhaps he talked to them about the Lord Jesus Christ, who should come to die for sinners; whose blood could wash away all their sins; and told them, that if they believed in him, he would forgive, and save them.

When Joseph was in prison, the chief butler and the chief baker of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, offended their master, and he sent them both to prison. One morning, when Joseph came in to see them, he found them looking sad and unhappy, and he asked, "Why look ye so sadly to day?" They said, "We have dreamed dreams; and we have no one to interpret them to us." Joseph answered, "God sends dreams; he only knows the interpretation; tell me your dreams, I pray you." Then the butler told his dream, and said, "I saw in my dream a vine, and in the vine three

branches; and they budded, and the flowers came, and the fruit ripened; and I took Pharaoh's cup, and gathered the grapes, and pressed them into the cup, and gave it to Pharaoh." Then Joseph said, "The three branches are three days. In three days, Pharaoh will restore thee to thy place, and thou shalt give the cup into his hand." And then Joseph said, "Do not forget me when it shall be well with thee; speak for me to Pharaoh, and bring me out of prison. For I was stolen away from Canaan, and brought to Egypt, and I have done nothing that they should put me into this dungeon." Then the baker told his dream, and said, "I had three baskets upon my head; they were full of baked meats for Pharaoh; and the birds came, and ate the meat out of the baskets on my head." Joseph answered, "The three baskets are three days. In three days, Pharaoh will hang thee upon a tree, and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee."

All happened as Joseph said, for God had given him wisdom to interpret rightly. In three days was Pharaoh's birthday, and he made a feast for all his servants, and called the butler and baker out of prison. He forgave the butler,

and restored him to his place, and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand; but the baker was hanged, as Joseph said.

Did the butler remember Joseph, and ask the king to take him out of prison? No; he quite forgot him; when he was happy and safe himself, he thought no more about Joseph. The butler was very unkind, and ungrateful, and selfish, and many people now are like him; they forget those who have been kind to them, and never think of them again. But God always remembers us; he says to every one who serves him, "They may forget, but I will not forget thee."

CHAPTER XIX.

PHARAOH'S DREAMS.

Two years after the butler came out of prison, Pharaoh king of Egypt had two wonderful dreams. He thought he stood by the river, and saw seven fat cows come out of it, and feed in a meadow. Soon after, he saw seven other cows come out, very thin and bad; and they eat up the seven fat ones. So Pharaoh awoke. Then he slept again, and dreamed; and he saw seven fine good ears of corn come up upon one stem; and soon after, seven ears more, very bad and thin; and the bad ears devoured the seven good ears; and the king awoke. In the morning, Pharaoh wondered what these dreams could mean, and he called all his wise men, and asked them to interpret them. But they had no heavenly wisdom, and God did not enable them to explain the dreams he had sent to Pharaoh. But when the butler heard Pharaoh and the wise men talking together about the dreams, he remembered his own dream, which he had two years before, and which Joseph had interpreted so truly;

and he went to Pharaoh, and said, "I remember to-day my faults long ago, when the king was angry, and sent me to prison with the chief baker. We both dreamed; and there was a young man, a Hebrew, in the prison with us; and he interpreted our dreams to us; and as he interpreted, so it was; I was forgiven, and the baker was hanged." Then Pharaoh sent, and called for Joseph directly.

Joseph had been a long time in the prison; but though the butler had forgotten him, his father in heaven had not forgotten him: God now was doing wonderful things for Joseph, which he did not yet know. Joseph washed, and shaved, and took off his prison clothes, and put on new, and came to Pharaoh. Then the king told his dreams, and asked Joseph to interpret them. But Joseph was not proud of his wisdom; he knew he had no power, no wisdom, in himself; but that all he had God gave to him; and so he said to Pharaoh, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." And God taught Joseph rightly to interpret the dreams. He said, "The seven fat cows, and the seven good ears of corn, are seven years of great fruitfulness: and the

seven thin cows, and the seven bad ears, are seven years of famine. Seven years are coming of great plenty in the land of Egypt; and then seven years of famine will begin, when there will be no corn. Now let Pharaoh look for a wise man, and set him over the land; and let him gather up the corn in the seven good years, and keep it laid up in all the cities of Egypt; that when the seven years of famine come, there may be food to eat." Pharaoh was much pleased with Joseph's wisdom and advice; and he said, Joseph should rule over the land, and the people should obey him. Then the king gave him a ring, and put a chain upon his neck, and dressed him in fine linen, and made him ride in a chariot; and all the people honoured him. It was God who did all these wonderful things for Joseph; he always remembers his people who love and serve him.

During the seven plenteous years, Joseph commanded the people to gather up the corn, and lay it safely in barns and storehouses; and they gathered very much corn; so much that they could not count it. But the seven good years ended, and then the seven bad years be-

gan. It was a sad time. There was no corn to reap; all was dry and dead; and the poor people cried for food. It is God who gives us our food: if he sent no rain, we should have no corn in our fields, no fruit in our gardens; and then the cattle must die, for there would be no grass for them, and we should be hungry, and cry for food, as the poor people in Egypt did. How good and kind our God is, to give us so many good things. Let us be thankful to him, and ask him still to "give us day by day our daily bread."

The famine was in Canaan also; poor old Jacob and his sons had no bread. But the Egyptians came to Joseph, and he opened all the store-houses, and sold corn to them: and when that was gone, they came again, and bought more; and Joseph had plenty for them all. So when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent his ten eldest sons to buy some: but Benjamin staid with his father; for Jacob loved him so much, that he did not like him to go away. The ten brothers went to Egypt, and came and stood before Joseph, and bowed to the ground. Did they remember Joseph? No: for Joseph was only a boy

when he went to Egypt; and now he was a man thirty-seven years old; but Joseph remembered his brothers directly, and he remembered, too, his dream of the sheaves of his brothers bowing down to him: how wonderfully that dream was now explained! But Joseph did not tell his brothers who he was, for he wished to try if they were still wicked, cruel, deceitful men; or if they were sorry for their past sins, and had turned to God. So he asked, "Who are you? Whence do you come?" They said, "We come from Canaan to buy corn." Then he asked again, "Have you more brothers?" They said, "We were twelve brothers; but now one is not, and the youngest is with his father in the land of Canaan." But Joseph said. "I do not know if you tell me the truth or not: I will prove you: one of you shall stay here a prisoner; and the others shall go, and take corn for your families; and bring your youngest brother to me; then I shall know that you are true men." The brothers were much distressed to hear this, and Joseph too was distressed to see their sorrow; and he turned away, and wept. Then

he hid his tears, and took Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

Joseph did all this not from revenge, but to make his brothers remember and feel their past sins, and their unkindness to him. And so they did. They said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, because we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us." Sin, secret sin, will always at last be discovered, and punished. "Be sure your sin will find you out."



CHAPTER XX.

BENJAMIN SENT TO EGYPT.

THE nine brothers paid Joseph for the corn; and he told his servant to fill their sacks, and to give them food to eat on the road. Then he told the servant to put the money they had paid, into the sacks again secretly; and the brothers laid the sacks upon their asses, and went away. When they came to the inn, one man opened his sack, to give food to his ass,

and there he saw his money again; and when they came home, they all found their money put again into the sacks; and they wondered very much how this could be. Jacob was very sorry when he heard that Simeon was a prisoner in Egypt, and that Benjamin was to go with his brothers: and he said, "My son shall not go with you. Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not; and ye will take Benjamin away." Reuben answered, "Give him to me, I will bring him to thee again." But Jacob would not let him go.

When all the corn was eaten, and Jacob and his sons had no more food, Jacob said to his sons, "Go again to Egypt; buy us a little food." But they answered, "We must not, we dare not go without Benjamin; for the man solemnly commanded us to bring him." Then Judah said, "Send the lad with me, and we will go. I will be surety for him." Then Jacob remembered, that the same gracious God who had kept him all his life, had power to keep his dear child also; so at last he said, "If it must be so, go: take a present for the man; fruit, and nuts, and honey, and spices;

and give him again the money you found in your sacks, and take more money for the new corn, and go, and Benjamin may go with you; and God give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin." Then they all arose, and took Benjamin, and went to Egypt again.

Jacob was alone now: but still God was with him, to keep and comfort him. What a blessing it is to those who love God, that he is always near them; his eye upon them; his hand around them! He can comfort his people in all their sorrows, as he comforted Jacob in his sorrow. He says, "I will never fail thee, nor forsake thee."

When Joseph saw Benjamin coming with his brothers, he said to his servant, "Bring the men home; they shall dine with me to-day." So the servant obeyed, and brought them all to Joseph's house, and talked kindly to them, and gave them water, and washed their feet, and fed their asses; and Simeon was sent to them out of prison. When Joseph came home, his brothers gave him the present they had brought, and bowed before him; but Joseph would not take their money. Then

he asked, "Is your father well?" And they said, "He is well." Then he asked again, "Is this your youngest brother?" and he looked very affectionately at Benjamin, and said, "God be gracious unto thee, my son." The tears were in Joseph's eyes, but he did not wish his brothers to see him weep; he went into his own room, and wept there. It was love and thankfulness that made him weep. Then he washed his face, and went to them again, and told the servants to set on bread. Then they made a feast, and Joseph sent messes to all his brothers; but Benjamin's mess was five times larger than any of the others; and "they drank and were merry with him."

When they had finished, Joseph said secretly to his servant, "Put the men's corn-money into their sacks again; and take my silver cup, and put it into Benjamin's sack." The servant obeyed; and in the morning he sent them all away. When they were gone, Joseph told his servant to run after the men, and accuse them of having stolen the cup, the silver cup out of which his master drank. The man went quickly, and soon overtook the brothers,

and told them all Joseph had said. The brothers wondered very much, for they knew they had stolen nothing, and they said, "With whomsoever the cup is found, let him die, and we will be slaves to my lord." So they all took down their sacks, and the servant looked, and found the cup in Benjamin's sack, where he had put it. Then the brothers rent their clothes, and went back again to Joseph, and fell down before him. And Joseph said, "What is this that you have done?" Judah answered, "What shall we say? God has found out our iniquity: behold we are my lord's servants." But Joseph said, "The man with whom the cup was found, he shall be my servant; but go you in peace to your father." Then Judah came near to Joseph, and said, "I am surety for the lad unto my father: let me then abide, instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go with his brethren: for how shall I go to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest I see the evil that shall come on my father." Then Joseph said to the servants, "Go out from me." And every one went away, and Joseph stood alone with his brothers. Then he wept aloud, and said, "I

am Joseph your brother whom ye sold into Egypt; is my father yet alive?" His brothers could not answer, but Joseph spoke very gently to them again, and said, "Do not be sorry, nor angry with yourselves because you sold me into Egypt: for God sent me here to preserve life. He has done wonders for me, and given me wisdom, to lay up corn for the famine, that the people may not die. Hasten now, and bring my father to me to Egypt; and I will nourish him and you, all the years of the famine. Tell him that I live, and that God has made me a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt, and that God has kept and blessed me all the years I have lived here." Then he fell upon his brothers' necks, and kissed them, and wept upon them; and they all talked and wept together.

King Pharaoh was glad to hear Joseph's brothers were come, and he sent a present to Jacob, and waggons to bring him and all his family to Egypt. Then Joseph gave clothes, and money, and food, to his brothers, and sent them away. They went home rejoicing, and ran to Jacob, and cried, "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over Egypt." But

Jacob could not believe the good news, till they showed him the wagons, and told him that Joseph had sent them to carry him to Egypt; and then he said, "It is enough: Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die."

We see now why Joseph, at first appeared so harsh to his brothers: it was to prove them for their good. When he found they were really penitent and sincere, and just and true in what they did, he showed them directly, how willingly he forgave them all. Let us learn, like Joseph, to return good for evil. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him."

CHAPTER XXI.

JACOB IN EGYPT.

JACOB and his sons soon began their journey to Egypt. It was a long journey in those days, but a very happy one for Jacob. When they came to Beersheba, good old Israel offered sacrifices to God, and thanked and praised him for all his mercies. In the night, God spoke to Jacob, and said, "I am God; the God of thy

fathers Abraham and Isaac; fear not to go to Egypt; for I will be with thee; and will make thee there a great people; and, in a future time, I will bring thy children's children again to Canaan." Then Jacob arose, and went to Egypt with all his family; his sons, and their wives, and their children, seventy people. When Joseph saw the wagons coming, he commanded his servants to bring his chariot, and rode in it to meet Jacob. How glad they were to meet again! Joseph fell on his father's neck, and kissed him, and they both wept a long time. They had much to tell one another: all the wonderful things God had done; all their past sorrows and fears; and all their joy now. It is very pleasant when dear friends meet again after they have been long parted: how joyful it will be to meet in heaven many of those whom we loved, and never part from them again!

The next day, Joseph brought his father and his brothers to king Pharaoh. The king was very glad to see them, and he spoke gently and kindly to old Jacob, and asked, "How old art thou?" Jacob said, "The days of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty

years; few and evil have the years of my life been." And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out. Joseph gave his father and his brothers a possession in Egypt, and fed them with bread all the years of famine. The people still came to Joseph to buy corn, but now all their money was gone: Joseph took it, and gave it to Pharaoh. Then the people brought their cattle, and gave them for corn: and when *they* were gone, they sold their fields: so all the land of Egypt became Pharaoh's, except the land of the priests, which was not sold. After the famine was over, God sent corn and bread in plenty again

The story of Joseph is very wonderful. He knew not why God sent him to Egypt; nor why he was put in prison; nor why he was so many years alone and sorrowful, far away from his dear father. But God knew why: he is very wise; he knows all things: he sees the end of all, and he commands all; and he does all rightly. Let us love and serve this wise, and great, and gracious God! Then he will be with us, to keep and comfort us, as he did Joseph: we know that "All things work together for good to them that love God."

CHAPTER XXII.

JACOB'S DEATH.

JACOB lived seventeen years happily in Egypt with all his family, and saw his sons' sons growing up around him. But now he was one hundred and forty-seven years old, and he became ill, and felt that he must soon die, and he sent for his son Joseph, to bless him, and talk to him. Joseph went directly to his father, and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Jacob was very ill, and lying upon his bed; but when he saw Joseph, he sat up, and began to talk to him of that gracious God, who had been so kind to them all; who had appeared to him many years before at Bethel, and promised to give the land of Canaan to his children for a possession. Then Jacob turned round, and saw Joseph's two sons standing by their father, and asked, "Who are they?" Joseph said, "They are my sons, the children whom God has given me in Egypt." Then Jacob told them to come to him, that he might bless them: and he put his arms around them, and kissed

them, and thanked God who had showed them to him. Then he put his hands upon their heads, and blessed both them and their father. He said, "The God who hath kept my fathers Abraham and Isaac, who has taken care of me all my life, the angel who redeemed me from evil, bless the lads." Then Jacob called all his sons, and blessed them. God taught him prophecy, and he told his sons of many wonderful things, which would happen when they were dead, and in their graves. He told Judah, that some of his children should be kings, and that the Lord Jesus Christ should be born in his family when the right time should come; and Jacob told his sons, that God would bring their children home again to Canaan after many years; and he commanded them not to bury him in Egypt, but to carry his body to Canaan, to the cave of Machpelah, and bury it there, by Abraham, and Isaac, and their families.

When Jacob had finished all he wished to say, he lay down again on the bed, and died, and his happy soul went to God, the God of his fathers, to be with him forever. Jacob was a sinner, like each of us; he had done

many wicked things; but all his sins were washed away; for Jacob had believed in Jesus.

When Joseph saw that Jacob was dead, he “fell upon his father’s face, and wept upon him, and kissed him.” All the people wept for Jacob seventy days. Then Joseph said to king Pharaoh, “My father commanded me not to bury him in Egypt, but to carry him to Canaan, to his own grave: let me now go to Canaan, and bury my father, and then I will come back again.” And Pharaoh gave him leave; so Joseph, and his brothers, and their servants, went up to Canaan with chariots and horses: but their little children, and their flocks, staid in Egypt. They carried with them Jacob’s dead body: it made them very sad to look upon it: and when they came to Canaan, they mourned for him again seven days; and then went on their journey, and buried Jacob in the field of Machpelah, by his fathers Abraham and Isaac. Jacob did not then wish to live in Canaan again; for he was in a better place, in the heavenly Canaan, where is no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. Let us remember, that we too must die, our bodies

must lie in the tomb, as Jacob's did, and our friends will weep for us, as his children wept for him. But if our sins have all been pardoned, as Jacob's were, if our hearts have been made new and clean by the Holy Spirit, as his was, then we shall be very happy when we die; happier than we can be now. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."

Joseph and his brothers finished burying their father, and looked at his tomb for the last time, and went back to Egypt. And then again Joseph's brothers asked him to forgive them, for they had not forgotten their past unkindness to him. Joseph wept when they spoke to him, and told them not to fear, for that he would take care of them. Then they were comforted, and they all lived in Egypt in love and peace. Joseph lived to be one hundred and ten years old; and when he was going to die, he said to his brothers, "I die, but fear not: God will be with you, and, in a future time, bring your children to Canaan." And Joseph told them to keep his bones, that they might be carried to Canaan, and be buried there. So Joseph died, "and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN EXAMPLE OF PATIENCE.

ABOUT this time, there was dwelling in Uz, in Arabia, a man named Job. Job was a very rich man; he had great possessions of sheep, and camels, and oxen, and asses; he was the greatest man in the east at that time. And Job was a holy man, as well as a rich man. The Bible says, he “feared God;” the same God whom Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob feared; and he hoped, as they did, to be saved by the Lord Jesus Christ, who was to come into the world to die for sinners. Job had several children; and he taught them to serve God, and prayed for them, and offered sacrifices for them, according to the command of God.

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord; and Satan came also among them.” What does this mean? Who were the sons of God, and why did God let Satan come among them? The Bible does not tell us.

Perhaps the sons of God were his true and faithful servants who came to worship before him; and, perhaps, Satan came among them, as he comes now among us, to tempt them to sin, and to lead them away from God.

But God spoke to Satan, and said to him, "Whence comest thou?" And Satan answered, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." Then God asked Satan again, if he had considered his servant Job, what a holy and upright man he was, and one who feared God. Satan had long known and hated Job, as he knows and hates all the people of God; and he even dared to accuse Job before God, and to say, that all his goodness was false and hypocritical; and that he pretended to fear God, only that he might be rich and safe, and prosperous, and not because he really loved him.

God knew all the truth about Job. He knew that Job was sincere, and not false and hypocritical as Satan said; but it pleased God to allow Satan, at that time, to try Job, and to vex and afflict him; and God did this for Job's own good; to make him more humble, more patient, and more believing. So the

Lord said to Satan, "All that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand." Then "Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord," to use all the power allowed him, to afflict and trouble righteous Job.

There was a day when Job's sons and daughters were eating, and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house; and there came a messenger to Job, and said, "The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them, and some enemies, the Sabeans, fell upon them, and took them away, and have slain the servants with the sword; and I only am escaped to tell thee." And while this messenger was speaking, there came another to Job, and said, "The fire is fallen from heaven, and has burned up the sheep and the servants; and I only am escaped to tell thee." And while he was speaking, another messenger came, and said, "The Chaldeans fell upon the camels, and carried them away, and slew the servants with the sword, and I only am escaped to tell thee." And while this man was speaking, a fourth messenger came, and said, "Thy sons and daughters were eating

and drinking in their eldest brother's house, and there came a great wind, and smote the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped to tell thee."

Poor Job! A very little time before, he had been the richest and most prosperous man in the east. Now, he had lost every thing; his flocks, and his herds, and his servants, and his children too,—all were gone. What did he do? How did he bear so much sorrow coming upon him so suddenly? There was one thing Job still had, and that enabled him to bear all this patiently and submissively. Job had not lost his trust in God. He felt quite sure that these troubles did not come without God's permission; and he knew that God could only permit what was right and good for him; so, when Job heard all these sad tidings, though he arose and rent his clothes, to show his sorrow, yet he fell down, and worshipped God, to show his submission to his will, and said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

Here is an example for us; an example of

patience. We must all have sorrows and troubles to bear, though not perhaps so many, and so great, as Job had. Then, whenever they come upon us, let us pray for Job's patience, and Job's holy trust in God. If we have God for our friend, as Job had, nothing can really hurt us; and we shall feel this, as he did, and be willing to submit to all our trials without murmuring, and to say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."



CHAPTER XXIV.

JOB IN TROUBLE.

AGAIN there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. Then God spoke to Satan, as he had done before, and asked him, if he had considered his servant Job, who was still faithful, though he had been so tried, and so afflicted. But Satan was not satisfied with all the troubles Job had suffered; he wished to vex and afflict him still more; and he told God that though Job

had borne the loss of his possessions patiently, yet, if his body was made to suffer disease and pain, he would then show that he was only a hypocrite after all, and would even curse God to his face. The Lord was pleased, in his wisdom, to allow Job to be still more tried and afflicted, so he said to Satan, "He is in thy hand; but save his life." Then Satan went out, and smote Job with sore boils all over his body.

Job had now to bear pain, as well as sorrow; yet he was patient and submissive still. And then he had another and a new trial. His wife was living, and she might have comforted Job in his trouble; but instead of encouraging him to trust in God, she advised him to put an end to his own life;—to kill himself. She said, "Curse God, and die." But Job reproved her for speaking so wickedly, and said, "What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Job knew that all came from God's hand, and by God's permission; and, therefore, he was willing to receive whatever happened to him, whether it were good or evil.

Had Job no friends to comfort him in his trouble? Yes; he had three friends; their names were Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

When they heard of his afflictions, they all determined to go together to see him, "to mourn with him and to comfort him." This was very right and kind. When our friends are sick, and in sorrow, we should pity them, and feel for them. We are to "Weep with those who weep."

When Job's friends came to the place where he was, they looked up, and saw him, but they did not know him. He was not now as he once had been. When they last visited him, he was prosperous and happy, with all his family, and all his possessions, and living in honour and peace, the greatest man in the east. But now, all was changed. There he sat, alone, among the ashes; his body was covered with a dreadful disease; all his possessions were gone, his children were dead, and he had no one to speak kindly to him, nor to comfort him. The sight made his friends feel very sad, and "they lifted up their voice, and wept." Then they rent their clothes, and sprinkled dust upon their heads, and sat

down with him upon the ground; and for seven days they did not speak a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great. Sometimes, when our friends are in very great trouble, as Job was, it is not well to try to comfort them by words. It is kinder and wiser to feel for them in silence. There is only one friend who can give real comfort to the afflicted then; and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is able and willing to relieve his people in all their sorrows for he is "a brother born for adversity."



CHAPTER XXV.

JOB AND HIS FRIENDS.

AT last, Job began to speak, and to complain very bitterly of all his sufferings. He was tempted even to wish he had never been born; and to murmur, and be impatient, and to find fault with God himself who had so afflicted him.

And did not Job's friends encourage him to trust in God, and submit to his will? No; instead of doing this, they only added to his

grief, by unkindly and unjustly accusing him. They told him, God never would have afflicted him so much, if he had not been a very wicked man: for they thought, that righteous people were always prosperous, and that only the wicked were afflicted; so when they saw Job in trouble, they said his sufferings were sent as a punishment for his sins, and they advised him to humble himself before God, and ask for pardon.

Job knew that he was a sinner; he knew that he could not trust to his own goodness and righteousness: he said, "How should man be just before God. If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me." But Job could not believe that all his troubles were sent to punish him for some particular sin; or, because he had been only pretending to serve God, when he did not really love him. No; Job felt that he had been sincere, not a hypocrite, as his friends unkindly said he was; and so when they accused him, he answered, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live."

Now Job and his friends were quite right in some things that they said, but in others

they were very much mistaken. Job's friends were right in advising him to humble himself before God, and ask for pardon; for afflictions are sent by God to lead his people to do this. But they were quite wrong in accusing Job of being a wicked man, and a hypocrite, because he was afflicted; for God often afflicts much, those who love and serve him best,—in love, not in anger; “Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth.” And though Job was right in saying, that he had not brought his sufferings on himself, by his own wickedness and hypocrisy, yet he spoke what was wrong too; for he almost accused God of unkindness and injustice, in afflicting him after he had so sincerely tried to serve God.

Job and his friends reasoned together a long time. Eliphaz, and Bildad, and Zophar, spoke to him more and more harshly; and Job still persisted in defending himself when they accused him; and at last he told them, in the bitterness of his grief, that they were all “miserable comforters;” “and the three men ceased to answer Job, because they saw that he was righteous in his own eyes.” This was very sad. It shows us how very

little good our fellow creatures can do us in a time of trouble. They cannot see our hearts, and therefore, very often, they misunderstand us, as Job's friends misunderstood him, and do us harm instead of good. "O put not your trust in any child of man, for there is no help in them." "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?"



CHAPTER XXVI.

ELIHU.

JOB and his friends were not alone when they talked together. A young man was sitting by, and listening to all they said; but he did not speak until they were silent; for they were older than he, and he thought, "Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom." This young man's name was Elihu. Humility and respect made him keep silent so long; but Elihu had much to say, for God had given him great wisdom; and so, when the others left off speaking, he

offered to answer Job himself. Elihu was angry with what had been said. He was displeased with Job, because he had justified himself more than God; and he was displeased with his three friends, "because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job."

So Elihu said, "Hearken unto me, I also will show my opinion." Then they all listened, in silence, to what Elihu had to say.

And how did Elihu answer them? First, he reproved Job for justifying himself more than God. Job had said, "I am righteous, and God hath taken away my judgment;" and "it profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God." This was accusing God of injustice; it was saying, that God had acted wrongly in afflicting a righteous man. But Elihu said, "Far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should commit iniquity; for the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways." Yes;—God is perfectly holy, and perfectly wise; and therefore he will not, he cannot do any thing wrong or unjust; God can never err, never be mistaken. God often, in-

deed, acts in a way which *we* cannot understand; he often does things which perplex us, and which seem to us to be for evil, and not for good. But this is because we are ignorant: because we see only a little part of God's doings; because we do not know, as he does, all the past, and all the future; nor see the end from the beginning, as he can. Then, whenever we feel doubtful, and perplexed, and inclined to murmur, like Job, at what God does, let us remember what Elihu said—"God is greater than man; why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters;" and if we feel this, then we shall be willing to trust to his power and goodness, and say as Abraham did, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

Elihu reminded Job of many things, which might teach him how much greater God was than he. He spoke of the eternity of God. He said, "God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out." How can we understand all the greatness of God, when we are ourselves poor, weak creatures, made of dust, and "crushed

before the moth?" And then, Elihu spoke of the works of God. He reminded Job of the light, and the thunder, and the clouds, and the rain; and of the wonderful way in which God orders all these things, too wonderful for Job to understand, for "He doeth great things which we cannot comprehend;" and therefore Job was to "stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God."

And now the Lord himself answered Job, and spoke to him out of the whirlwind; and bid him reply to him if he could. He said, "I will demand of thee, and answer thou me." And then the Lord asked Job, if he could tell how the earth was made, and if he could govern the motion of the stars, or was able to rule the sea, and the light, and the darkness. And God spoke to him of some of the animals which he had created, and of the wonderful instinct which he had given them; he reminded Job of the goats, and the wild ass, and the peacock, and the ostrich, and the horse. Job had seen all these animals; perhaps he knew much of their habits, and their histories; and he might have known, too, much of the other works of God. But Job

could not make one of these things, nor even understand how they were made. He could only notice them, and admire them, and wonder at them;—and that was all. And if Job could not understand the works of God, how could he understand God himself? and then, how could he dare to contend with him, or to murmur at any thing he did? Job felt all this. He felt humble and ashamed: and therefore, instead of again trying to justify himself, he said, “Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.”

And when *we* behold the wonderful works of God, we should, like Job, feel our own weakness and sinfulness; and how thankful we should be, that this great Creator is our merciful Father too; that “God is love;” and that he has shown his love by giving “His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE BENEFIT OF AFFLICTION.

God spoke again to Job out of the whirlwind, that he might make him feel still more his own sinfulness and folly, in trying to justify himself before God. And then, the Lord told Job of other wonderful works of his. He described two great animals, Behemoth and Leviathan, which were so strong and powerful, that even mighty men were afraid of contending with them. How much greater then, must he be who made them, and how vain and foolish to resist his will!

Then Job answered the Lord, and said, "I know that thou canst do every thing. I have uttered what I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." And did God forgive Job? Yes; as soon as Job was humble and penitent, God pardoned, and accepted, and blessed him.

Afterwards, the Lord spoke to Eliphaz, and said, "My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends; because ye have not spoken

of me that which is right, as my servant Job has." And God commanded them to offer sacrifice for their sin, and to ask Job to pray for them; and they did so, and the Lord accepted Job.

Did Job still remain in sorrow and affliction? No;—"the Lord turned his captivity." He took away his painful disease, and made him well and strong again. He sent all his friends to comfort him, and to give him presents; and the Lord himself gave Job twice as much as he had before:—sheep, and oxen, and camels, and asses; and he had also seven sons, and three daughters. Job lived in comfort and prosperity for many years after, having the blessing of God to make him happy; and at last he died, "old and full of days."

And now what are we to learn from the history of Job? One thing we may learn from him is patience. St. James says, "We count them happy that endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." And this teaches us also, the use and benefit of affliction to

God's people. "God does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." He afflicts in mercy. He would not have allowed Job to be so tried and troubled, but for Job's own good and profit. And we are to learn, too, from Job, not to justify ourselves before God. Job's afflictions were sent to teach him this. We should remember how sinful we all are, and how often we offend God; and then, when trouble comes, instead of justifying ourselves, we shall confess, that, "God has punished us less than our iniquities deserve." And the history teaches us another thing;—how to obtain pardon. When Job and his friends sinned, they were to repent; to humble themselves before God, to pray to him, and to offer a sacrifice in faith; and when they did so, they were forgiven, and accepted. And so, when we sin, we must repent, and pray for pardon too. We need not to offer up a sacrifice, for the great sacrifice has been offered up; Jesus Christ himself has died on the cross for us, "once for all." But we must come to him in faith, and look to him for salvation, and to him alone. Job prayed for his friends, and was accepted. And so, Jesus is now

praying in heaven, for all those who repent, and turn to him; and he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CRUEL KING.

MANY years passed away. Joseph was dead, and all his brothers. A new generation of Israelites now lived in Egypt; they were very many, the country was full of them. A new king was reigning, who did not know Joseph; and he was very cruel, and hated the Israelites. He commanded them to do very hard work in the fields, and in making brick; and their cruel masters beat them, and were very unkind to them. And did they die when the king gave them all this hard work, which made them so weak and tired? No, because God kept them; and therefore nothing could hurt them; they grew, and multiplied more and more. And why did God care for them so much? Because he had promised Abraham, many years before, that

his children should be like the sand for multitude, and like the stars in the sky, which we cannot count. God never forgets his promises, nor his people who love and serve him. But God had promised Jacob to bring his children home to Canaan, and now they were far off from their possession;—had not God forgotten this promise? No: we read that he told Abraham, that his children should go to a strange country, and be afflicted there till the end of four hundred years. God knew the time; soon the four hundred years would be over, and then the Israelites would be sent home to their own land again.

But Pharaoh, that cruel king, did not know God, and he tried again and again to destroy the Israelites. He commanded every little Israelitish boy that was born, to be thrown into the river, and drowned. This was very, very sad. The poor mothers loved their dear children very much, and cried bitterly about this cruel, wicked law; but the king had no pity, and many of the little boys were thrown into the river, and drowned. But God loved those children; and when they died, he took their souls to be with him in heaven.

There was a woman in the family of Levi, who loved God, and her husband too was a good man. God gave them a little boy. The parents loved this dear child very much, and tried to save him from the cruel king. For three months, the mother hid her child, that he might not be drowned; but when he grew older and larger, she could not hide him any longer. But she knew God could keep her little boy, if she could not, and she told all her sorrow to him. God can help us when we are in trouble; and he can take care of us, when our dearest friends cannot; and he was pleased now to help this poor woman who trusted in him, and to take care of her little child.

The poor mother gathered some reeds, and platted them into a little basket or ark; and then she took her dear child, and put him into the ark, and carried him to the river. Did she throw him in? No she laid him gently among the high grass and reeds, by the side of the river. She could take care of him no more, so she gave him up to God, who alone could keep him. Then she kissed the dear little baby many times, and went home to weep and pray alone; but she left Miriam,

Dayspring.



Little Moses.—p. 113.

her little girl, to watch near her brother. Soon she saw some people coming; who were they? They were ladies; one was the cruel king's daughter, and the others were her maids; and they walked along by the river, for the princess was going to bathe. They did not see Miriam; she was a little way off, but she could see them, and heard all they said. The little girl must have felt very much afraid for the poor baby; perhaps she thought, the ladies would go back, and tell the king; and then he would send and drown her little brother. The king's daughter soon saw the ark among the reeds, and she sent her maid to fetch it. The maid ran, and took up the ark, and brought it to her mistress, and opened it. There was the poor little baby; and when he saw the strangers about him, and not his own dear mother, he began to cry. Pharaoh's daughter was not like her cruel father; she pitied the poor baby, and loved him, and said, "It is one of the Hebrews' children." When Miriam heard the kind lady speak, she went up to the princess, and said, "Shall I go, and call a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for thee?" Pharaoh's daughter said, "Go."

Then Miriam ran home, and told her mother about the kind lady who wished to save the dear baby ; and asked her mother to come and nurse it. Miriam and her mother went back to Pharaoh's daughter, and the kind princess said, " Take this child, and nurse it for me, and I will pay thee thy wages." How glad the little baby was to be in its mother's arms again ! The mother brought him home, and nursed him, and he grew ; and when he was a little older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter again. The princess loved the child ; and she said, " He shall be my son, and I will name him Moses, (or, drawn out) because I drew him out of the water."

Here is a wonderful story ; as wonderful as the story of Joseph. How kind God is to those who love and pray to him ! He heard this mother's prayer, and saved her child from a cruel death. And God loves to save children now. He keeps them when they are little babies in their cradles ; he keeps them when they run about, and gives them health, and strength, and all they have. But God likes best, that children's souls should be saved. Jesus says, " It is not the will of your Father

which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.” He will hear them if they pray to him, and forgive their sin, and wash it all away in the blood of Jesus; and when they die, he will take their souls to heaven, and make them happier than little Moses could be in the house of Pharaoh’s daughter; and they will be his children for ever and ever.



CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BEST RICHES.

PHARAOH’S daughter loved Moses very much; and she told the wise men of Egypt to teach him all they knew; for she wished Moses to be very wise. The Egyptians knew many things, and had much wisdom; but not the best wisdom; they did not know nor worship the true God. They worshipped animals; bulls, and sheep, and dogs, and cats, and crocodiles, and insects. But the Israelites, who lived in Egypt, remembered the God of their fathers Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; and

the mother of Moses, no doubt, taught him holy things, true wisdom, when he was a very little boy; and she prayed for him, that he might be kept from sin, and that he might love and serve the Lord. And God heard her prayer; and taught Moses, by the Holy Spirit, that riches and wordly things could not make him happy, nor save his soul; that God alone can keep him from sin; and that he could be saved only by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who should at a future time, come down from heaven and die for sinners. Pharaoh's daughter called him her son, and wished to give him great riches; but Moses did not wish to be rich: he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." St. John says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." If we love pleasure, or riches, or power, or sin, more than we love God, we cannot be his children. We must give him all our best affections, and our love. Then we shall have God to keep us, and bless us, wherever we are; and when we die, we shall have a home in heaven, and treasures which will last for ever. Jesus said to his disciples, "Lay not

up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal ; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal.”

When Moses was grown up, he went to visit his poor brethren the Israelites, who were suffering so much in Egypt. One day he saw an Egyptian cruelly wounding and probably killing an Israelite. They were alone, but God's eye was upon them. God saw the wicked Egyptian, and the poor Israelite, and sent Moses to help his suffering brother. Moses ran to the two men, and saved the Israelite, and killed the Egyptian, and hid the body in the sand. The next day, he went out again, and saw two men fighting. Were they Egyptians? No, they were both Israelites. Moses was grieved to see them so wicked : for God's people ought to be kind and gentle ; brothers ought to love one another ; it is very sad to see them fight and quarrel. So he went to them, and tried to make peace between them. But the one who did the wrong, would not attend to Moses • and said, “ Who sent thee to

be a judge? Wilt thou kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian yesterday?" When Moses heard this, he was afraid, for he thought, the people knew what he had done; and the king might be angry, and kill him. So he fled from Egypt, and went to Midian, and sat down by a well. As he sat there, some young women came to the well to water their sheep; and Moses helped them, and drew water for them. When they went home, they told their father how kind Moses had been: their father's name was Jethro; and when he heard it, he sent for him, and gave him food, and asked him to live with him in Midian. Moses did so; and sometime after, he married one of Jethro's daughters, who was named Zipporah. Moses had not now the riches of Egypt, which he had when he lived at the king's house; he was a poor man, keeping Jethro's sheep in the wilderness. But he knew that God would take care of him; and he loved God better than all the fine things in Egypt.

But did God forget the Israelites, when Moses was gone? No; he heard them cry, and remembered his promise to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. "God looked upon the children of Israel." We may be sure that

God's eye is always upon us ; he knows all our sorrows, and sees all our tears, and, in due time, he will comfort and deliver us, if we trust in him



CHAPTER XXX.

THE BURNING BUSH.

MOSES was keeping Jethro's sheep by Mount Horeb, and one day he led them to the foot of the mountain in the desert, and looking around, he saw a bright light shining near him ; and he looked up, and saw a bush burning with fire. But the bush was not consumed ; it did not turn black, and crumble to pieces ; and Moses wondered very much, and said, "Why is not the bush consumed ? I will go and see." So Moses went to look ; but when he came near, he heard a voice out of the bush, saying, "Moses, Moses." Who called him ? What made the bush burn, and why was it not consumed ? The voice said again, "The place where thou standest is holy ground. I am God ; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

But the Lord did not come to hurt his ser-

vant; he came to comfort him, and to make him and his poor brethren happy. The Lord said, "I have seen my people's sorrow; I have heard their cry. I am come to send thee to Pharaoh: and thou shalt bring my people out of Egypt." But Moses said, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?" It was not right of Moses to be afraid when God sent him; he ought to have obeyed directly; but the Lord was very kind and gentle, and he spoke again to comfort Moses. He said, "I will be with thee; tell the people that I send thee. If the king disobey my command, I have power to punish him; and I will send plagues upon Egypt, and bring out my people safely." But Moses was still unwilling to go, and said, "Perhaps the people will not believe me." The Lord then told him to throw his rod upon the ground. Moses obeyed, and it became a serpent; and he fled from it for fear. But the Lord said, "Take it by the tail;" and Moses caught it, and it did not bite nor hurt him, but became a rod again in his hand directly. Then God told Moses to put his hand into his bosom. Moses obeyed, and his hand became covered with leprosy: but God told him to put his hand again into

his bosom, and in a moment it was well. Then God told him to go and show these wonders to the people; that they might believe that he had sent him.

Was Moses willing to go to Egypt now? No, he was still afraid; he said, "Lord, I cannot speak well; my tongue is slow, and I have no words." But the Lord said, "Who hath made man's mouth? Who maketh the deaf, and the dumb, and the seeing, and the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Go; obey my command, and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say." Moses should have remembered that the Lord knew how to give him the ability to speak well, and would do so if he obeyed as he commanded. All we have to do is to obey God.

But still Moses wished not to go. Then the Lord was angry, for though he is very kind and patient with his people, yet he does not like them to disobey his commands, nor to obey slowly and unwillingly. But the Lord said to Moses, "Aaron thy brother may go with thee; he can speak well; and I will teach you both what you shall do." Then Moses obeyed: he was timid and fearful in himself, but the

Lord gave him strength and courage; so he went home, and took leave of Jethro, and called his wife Zipporah, and his two sons, and put them upon an ass, and returned to Egypt. Then God said to Aaron, who was living in Egypt, "Go and meet Moses." So Aaron went into the wilderness, and soon saw Moses and his family coming; and he was very glad, and ran, and kissed him. Moses had much to tell Aaron about the wonders God had shewn him; and he asked Aaron to go with him to the king, and to command him to send away the Israelites. Aaron was willing to go; so they both went and called the elders of the Israelites, and told them that God had seen their sorrows, and was going to deliver them. Then they bowed down their heads, and worshipped.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE FIRST FOUR PLAGUES.

MOSES and Aaron went together to the king, who was now reigning in Egypt, and said, "The Lord commands thee to let the Israelites go." But Pharaoh answered, "I do not know the Lord; I will not let them go." Then the king told the Israelites' masters to give them more work, and the poor people were not able to finish their hard tasks in making brick; and their cruel masters beat them, and said, "You are idle; fulfil your work, your daily tasks." The Israelites cried to Moses, and Moses went to God, and told him his sorrow. God knew all; his eye was upon them, and very soon he would deliver them, and he said, "I have heard their groaning, I remember my covenant with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and I will bring my people to Canaan as I have promised."

Moses was now eighty years old; but he was not weak and feeble, as many old men are; he was strong and powerful. God made him so, because there was much for Moses to do before he died. It is God who gives us

all our health and strength: and if we are well and strong, we must not be idle. There is much for us all to do; and we must use our health and strength for God. "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

God now gave Moses and Aaron power to do wonders, and to work miracles before Pharaoh. They went to the king; and Aaron threw down his rod before him, and it became a serpent. But Pharaoh called his wise men, and told them to try to do the same; and they did so with their enchantments. Had they power to work miracles? No; perhaps they might have learned to tame serpents to look like rods in their hands; and then they might have thrown them down, as Aaron did, and so pretended to work a miracle. But God made Aaron's rod swallow up their rods. Pharaoh did not care for this, nor did he obey the command to let Israel go; and then God said, he would punish Pharaoh, by turning his fine river into blood.

The river Nile is very useful in Egypt; no rain falls there to water the ground; but in the summer, the river rises, and overflows the

country, and makes the land soft, and then the people sow their seed, and the grass and corn soon spring up. How kind God is to take so much care of the dry hot country of Egypt! Did Pharaoh and the Egyptians thank God, who gave them the Nile to water their land? No, the Egyptians forgot God; they made their river a god, and worshipped it, and sacrificed to it. But the Nile had no power to make the country fruitful; it was God who made it, and who brought up its waters, and watered the land; and now he determined to punish and humble the Egyptians, and to turn their river god into blood.

God did as he said. He told Moses to go and stretch his rod over the waters; and, directly he did so, all became blood. The ponds, and the water in the vessels, and the beautiful river, all were blood. The fish died; the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river; and their river god could not help them now. Did they repent, and ask God to forgive them? No; and therefore God became more angry, and he sent a new punishment upon them. He told Moses, again to stretch out his hand over the river;

and a very, very great number of frogs came up, and covered all the land. The frogs came into the houses, and beds, and ovens; and wherever the Egyptians went, they found them. They worshipped frogs; now God showed them how bad and foolish such gods were. Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Intreat God to take away the frogs, and I will obey him, and let Israel go." So Moses prayed, and God heard his prayer, and made all the frogs die. And did Pharaoh send the Israelites away? No; when the plague was gone, Pharaoh was disobedient again, and he would not attend to what Moses and Aaron said. God was merciful to take away the plague, and he would have forgiven Pharaoh, if he had prayed humbly; but he did not, so God punished the wicked king again. He told Moses to stretch his rod over the dust, and it became lice upon the people, and upon the animals. The wicked magicians tried to do the same; but they could not, though they had imitated the other miracles; they had no power, and they confessed this, and said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God;" but the king did not attend to them.

The next morning, the Lord sent Moses to say to Pharaoh, "Let the people go; for if thou wilt not, I will send flies upon thee, and upon all thy people; but I will send no flies upon my people, the Israelites." The flies came; probably biting and stinging insects, very, very many; but none came to hurt the Israelites. The Egyptians had a god, called the god of flies; but he could not help them now. Then Pharaoh begged again that God would take away the flies, and promised to let Israel go; and God took them away; but still Pharaoh would not obey. How sad it is when people are disobedient, and rebel against God! They cannot resist his power; he can punish them in this world, and send them into hell when they die. But if wicked people will come to God, and confess and forsake their sins, he is willing to pardon them for the sake of Jesus Christ. He likes better to forgive, than to punish. "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord."

CHAPTER XXXII.

MORE PLAGUES.

THEN God said to Moses, "Tell Pharaoh, it he will not let the people go, I will to-morrow send a grievous murrain upon all his cattle; upon the horses, and asses, and camels, and oxen, and sheep." And the Lord did so on the morrow; and all the cattle of the Egyptians died, but not one that belonged to the Israelites; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened still. Then Moses took ashes out of the furnace, and threw them up towards heaven, at God's command, and they became dust, and brought sore boils upon men and beasts. The wicked Egyptian magicians suffered from the boils, and could not stand before Pharaoh. But still the king would not attend to God's command.

The next day, God sent very heavy hail, which broke the trees to pieces, and destroyed all the plants in the field; and the thunder roared in the sky, and the lightning ran along the ground. Pharaoh was very much frightened now; and he sent for Moses and Aaron,

and cried, "I have sinned; God is righteous, and I am wicked: intreat God to take away the thunder, and the lightning, and hail, and I will let you go." Then Moses went out, and cried to God; and the Lord heard, and took away the fearful storm. What wonderful power God has! He can send storms, and take them away when he pleases; he can kill us with the lightning, or keep us safely. A thunder storm is a fearful thing; it is very awful to hear the loud thunder rolling in the clouds, and to see the lightning flash; but if we are the people of God, we need not fear. He can keep us; and the lightning will not hurt us without his permission. He can take care of us, as he took care of the Israelites in Egypt.

But when the rain was over, Pharaoh was again disobedient, and said, "I will not let the people go." Then God sent locusts, very, very many, to eat all the green things in the land. We have locusts, but they seldom do any mischief in this country; but in Eastern countries they are very common; and they come in great numbers, and sometimes eat the trees, and the fruit. The locusts God sent to punish Egypt,

were very large ; and there were so many that the land was darkened by them, and they ate every thing which the hail had not destroyed. The king again sent for Moses and Aaron, and begged them to pray for him. And they did pray, and God heard them ; but when the plague was taken away, wicked Pharaoh again said, "I will not let you go." Then God sent a new and very dreadful plague over the land of Egypt ; this was thick darkness ; there was no light from the sun, nor moon, nor stars, for three days ; and the people could not see to move from their places all that time. It was not common darkness ; but a wonderful and fearful darkness sent by God.

Were the Israelites in darkness too ? No, they had light. God knew who believed in him, and who did not ; and he did not punish his own people. He could make the sun shine brightly upon them, when it was black night with the Egyptians. Pharaoh again called Moses, and said, "You may go ; only let your cattle be stayed." But Moses said, "No, we must take all our possessions with us ; we will go with our wives, and our little

children, our sons, and our daughters, our flocks, and all we have." Then Pharaoh was very angry, and drove Moses away, and told him never to come before him again. Moses said, "Thou hast spoken well; I will see thy face again no more;" and he went away from the king. Poor wicked Pharaoh! He and Moses must meet again before the judgment throne. All must meet there; and how sad it will be, to see the wicked then separated from the righteous, and sent away far from God, and happiness, and holy people, for ever.

The darkness ended in three days; and then God said, "I will send one more plague upon Pharaoh, and afterwards he will let the people go. I will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt." And did God kill the first-born of the Israelites too? No; he told them what they must do, if they believed his words, and wished to escape. They were to take a lamb, a lamb without spot or blemish, and to kill it in the evening, and sprinkle the blood upon the lintel, and upon the two door posts; then they were to roast the lamb, and eat it.

In the night, God sent an angel from heaven

to smite the first-born of the wicked Egyptians ; the eldest child in every house was killed, and all the first-born of cattle. It was a sad time in Egypt, there was a great cry through all the land. But were the believing, obedient people safe ? Yes, the Lord saw the blood upon the doors, and passed over the houses, and did not slay the first-born in them. All those who obeyed God, and sprinkled the lamb's blood upon the posts, were safe.

The Lord Jesus Christ is like the lamb of the Israelites. He is the "Lamb of God," holy and pure ; "without blemish and without spot." He was slain, as the paschal lamb was, and his blood was shed upon the cross. Why ? To save our souls. The lamb of the Israelites saved their bodies from death. The Lamb of God saves our souls from hell. The blood of the lamb in Egypt was sprinkled upon the doors ; and as the Israelites looked at the blood they felt safe. In like manner we may feel safe from eternal death, if we trust in the efficacy of the blood of Jesus, which was shed to save us, as the blood of the lamb was shed to save the Israelites.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE ISRAELITES.

WHEN the destroying angel flew through Egypt, and came to the palace, and killed Pharaoh's eldest child, the king was very much frightened. He called for Moses and Aaron in the night, and said, "Rise up, you, and the Israelites, and their children, and the flocks, and herds, and be gone." And the Egyptians gave to the Israelites all they asked for; gold, and silver, and clothes; and the Israelites made haste, and took up their things, and put them upon their shoulders, and hurried away to Succoth.

How many were there? six hundred thousand men, and many women and children, and very much cattle. When Jacob and his family came into Egypt many years before, they were only seventy people. God had blessed and multiplied them very much; their cruel masters in Egypt could not destroy them, because God had promised to take care of them, and to bring them home to Canaan again. Many hundred years before, God had said to Abraham, "Thy

children shall go to a strange country, and be afflicted four hundred years, and then I will bring them back to Canaan." And so it was. Jacob and his children went to Egypt; they died; and their children, and their children's children, for many generations, staid there in sorrow, with cruel kings to rule over them. But God did not forget them. He knew the right time; and when four hundred years were over, then he sent Moses and Aaron, and gave them power to do wonders, and brought away his people in safety. How wonderful and how wise is God! He knows all things, sees all things, does all things. He knows the present, the past, and the future; and he does all things rightly. Then let us love, and fear, and trust in this good, and wise, and holy, and powerful God; for he will do for his people every thing that is good for them. And let us fear to make him angry, by hardening our hearts as wicked Pharaoh did; for he can and will punish all who rebel against him.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE EGYPTIANS DROWNED.

WHEN Moses and the Israelites left Egypt in so much haste, they did not forget Joseph's dying command, but carried his bones with them. Then they went on, and came to the Red Sea. But when Pharaoh heard they were gone, he commanded his servants to bring his chariots, and his horses; and he went with a great army to bring the people back again. He overtook them by the sea; they were all resting in their tents: a pillar of a cloud was before them; God gave them this pillar to show them the road by day; and by night, he put before them a pillar of fire to give them light. They were safe and happy under God's keeping. But soon they looked up; and what did they see? Pharaoh and the Egyptians coming to them very quickly, with their chariots and horses. The Israelites cried to the Lord, and said to Moses, "Why hast thou brought us away from Egypt? We shall die now, here in this wilderness!" They forgot that God was still with them; but

Moses said, "Fear not; be still, and the Lord will fight for you." Then the Lord commanded the people to go on. But where could they go? The great sea was before them, and there was no bridge to go over, and no ships to carry them across. What could they do? God knew; he could find a way for them to escape. The pillar which was before them, moved behind; it stood now between the Israelites and the Egyptians; but the side next the Israelites was bright, to give them light; and the side next the Egyptians, was dark and cloudy, so that they could not see to do the Israelites any hurt all that night. Then God told Moses to stretch his rod over the sea; and the Lord sent a very strong wind to blow back the water; and in the morning, there was a dry road through the sea, and the waters stood like a wall on each side. Who did this wonder? Not Moses, not his rod, not the strong wind alone;—it was God, God who has power to do all things. The Israelites walked through the sea, all of them, on dry ground; not one was drowned, for God held back the waters till all were gone over safely. Then the Egyp-

tians tried to pursue them, and went in after them; but God looked angrily at them through the pillar, and made them fear, and took off the wheels of their chariots. And then he told Moses to stretch his rod over the sea, and the waters came back again upon Pharaoh's army, and chariots, and horses which had come into the sea, and they were all drowned.

In the morning, the Israelites saw their enemies lying dead upon the sea shore. The Egyptians could hurt them no more now; their poor bodies were cold and dead, and their souls were gone to be judged by God, whom they had rebelled against, and disbelieved. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

The Israelites thanked God, and sang praises to him. Then they went on into the wilderness of Shur. They wandered there three days, and found no water. At last, they came to Marah, and there was water; but the water was bitter, and they could not drink it. Then the people were discontented again, and said to Moses, "What shall we drink?" Was this right? No; the Israelites were discontented and unbelieving people. They knew God had power to

give them water if he pleased; and they knew that they ought to be patient if he gave them none; he had done many wonderful things for them, and he could do as many more; but they forgot his kindness, and were impatient, and angry, and discontented. Moses was sorry to find the people doing wrong again so soon. He could not comfort them; he could not make the water good; but he remembered who could, and he cried to the Lord. And did God attend to Moses? Yes; he did not forget his distressed people. Moses "Cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet?"

Was there any wonderful power in this tree? No, the power was in God; the tree could do no good without him. God taught his people how great his power is, because he wished them to trust in him, and to feel safe and happy in his keeping. We ought all to trust him. He knows what is best for us; and, if we are his people, we are safe in all places, and may have comfort in all our sorrows.

God is like a kind father to his people; they have no more power to keep themselves,

than a little child has; but his hand is upon them; and, in all their sorrows and dangers, he is with them. Then they ought to trust in him, as a child does in his father, without murmuring, without impatience; and he will be with them all their lives, and when they die, he will bring their souls in safety to their happy home in heaven.



CHAPTER XXXV.

FOOD IN THE DESERT.

WHEN God sweetened the bitter waters of Marah, he spoke kindly to the Israelites, and said, "If you will obey me, and do what is right, then I will be with you, and keep, and bless, and strengthen you; and I will not send any of those diseases and plagues upon you, which I sent upon the Egyptians." Then they were comforted, and went on to Elim, and there they found twelve wells of water, and many date palm trees; and they pitched their tents there. They were very glad to see these trees. The fruit is very pleasant and refreshing to poor tired wan-

derers in the wilderness; the trees on which it grows can live in these hot places, and water is always found near the date trees. How kind God is to make this useful fruit grow in the wilderness!

When the Israelites went away from Elim, they came into another wilderness, the Desert of Sin. Then they began to be discontented; and they murmured again, and said, "We shall die of hunger, for there is no food here. When we were in Egypt, we had plenty; but now, we have nothing; why did you bring us here?" How unthankful these people were! God had delivered them from their cruel masters, and brought them safely through the sea; and he had given them sweet water to drink, and promised always to take care of them; and yet they would not trust him. It is very sad to be discontented, if we have not all we wish. Who gives us food? who takes it away? God; and all God does is right. When we are discontented with our food, or clothing, or any thing he gives us, we sin against him.

Moses went again to God, and told him all his sorrows, and all that the people said.

Then God answered, "I have heard their murmurings; go, and tell them, I will give them flesh to-night to eat; and in the morning I will give them bread." Where could they find flesh? Must they kill all their flocks and herds? No; God sent them some birds called quails, which came in great numbers, and covered the tents; and the Israelites caught, and killed, and ate them in the evening. And was this all God gave them? No; in the morning, when the dew was gone, the Israelites saw the ground covered with a little round thing, white like frost. It was new to all the people, and they came out, and looked, and wondered, and asked, "What is it?" Nobody knew; but Moses said, "This is the bread God has given you to eat." How wonderful this was! God sent this sweet bread to feed his people in the wilderness, when there was no corn for them to eat. God can take care of us always, wherever we are.

The Israelites called the new food which God sent, manna; it was sweet and nice, like honey. Moses said, "You must gather the manna fresh every morning. God promises to send it every day; but you must not keep it

till the next morning. Every one of you must gather an omer full; but the day before the sabbath, you must gather two omers full, and keep one of them for the sabbath; for God will send no manna on the sabbath-day. Some of the people would not believe Moses they determined to try, and keep the manna till the morrow, and see if it would be good. But, in the morning, when the people looked at the manna they had kept, they found that it was full of worms, and smelt very badly; they could not eat it, but threw it away; and Moses was angry with them, because they were unbelieving and disobedient. And did not the manna saved for the sabbath become bad? No; because God kept it good; he did not wish his holy sabbath to be broken, and he had power to keep the manna fresh and sweet if he pleased. But there were some more disobedient people who would not believe Moses, nor attend to God's command. They went out on the sabbath day to gather manna. Did they find it? No; God did not send any, and they went home again empty; and God was angry with them for their disobedience.

The sabbath is not a day on which we ought to do any unnecessary work. It is God's day ; he kindly gave it to us, that we might have more time to attend to our souls, and to think of him and death, and judgment, and heaven, and hell. We should not think much of our food on this holy day ; we should prepare it as much as is possible the day before, as God told the Israelites to do. We have our food from God, as they had. It is not rained down from heaven, because God does not work miracles ; and we live in a country where there is plenty of corn to make bread. But God sends down rain from heaven to make the corn grow, and he makes the sun shine to ripen it. He alone can cause the grass to spring up, and give food to the beasts of the field. We must pray, "Give us day by day our daily bread." And when we eat it, we must thank God who gave it, and not wish for more nor better food than he sends. While we live, we must eat to keep our bodies in health and strength ; but, in heaven, we shall "hunger no more." There we shall want no bread, and never feel weak and weary again. Let us remember that our bodies will very soon die, and turn into dust ; and pray God to make

us ready to go to that holy, happy place, where there is no more hunger, nor thirst, nor pain, nor sorrow, nor sin.



CHAPTER XXXVI.

REPHIDIM.

THE Israelites now went on, through the wilderness of Sin, to Rephidim. How did they know the way? God went before them in the pillar of cloud by day, and in the pillar of fire by night. When the pillar stopped, they stopped; and when the pillar moved, they moved, and followed it wherever it went. While we live, we are like the Israelites travelling in the wilderness; but, if we are God's people, we need not fear, because he is always by us. He does not go before us in a pillar of cloud and fire; but his hand is always over us to guide and keep us, and his eye sees us wherever we are. We must pray God to lead us in the right way, in the way to heaven.

There was no water at Rephidim; and the people murmured again, and were very angry with Moses, and very unthankful to God.

Then Moses cried to God, and he heard the prayer. God told him to go to Mount Horeb, and strike the rock; and he promised, that then water should come out. Moses obeyed God, and struck the rock, and water came out. It was God's power that did this miracle; not Moses, nor the rod, but God alone, could bring water out of the rock.

There were some wicked people who lived not far from this wilderness, called Amalekites, and now they came to fight with Israel, in Rephidim. Moses called Joshua his servant, and said to him, "Choose men, and go and fight with the Amalekites; and I will go up to the top of a mountain, with the rod of God in my hand." So Joshua and the soldiers went to fight; and Moses, and Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill. What did they do there? Moses held up his hand, with the rod of God in it, and prayed God to give the Israelites power to conquer their enemies. God heard Moses pray, and put strength into the soldiers' hands, and courage into their hearts, and gave them power over their enemies. But Moses was tired of holding up his hands; they were heavy, and fell down,

and then the Amalekites became strong, and the Israelites became weak. But Aaron and Hur took a large stone, and put it under Moses, and he sat upon it; and Aaron and Hur held up his hands all the day, till the sun went down. And God blessed the Israelitish soldiers; they conquered their enemies, and drove all the wicked Amalekites away.

We have enemies, in our own hearts, to fight against. Satan is our great enemy; he tries to tempt us to sin; he wishes to destroy our souls, as the Amalekites wished to destroy the Israelites. And have we power to conquer him? No; *we* have none, but God promises to give us the Holy Spirit if we ask him. He has power to drive Satan away. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." We must resist him, not in our own strength, but in the strength of God, and for that we too must pray.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

JETHRO'S VISIT.

SOME time before Moses and the Israelites went out of Egypt, Moses had sent home his wife Zipporah, and his two sons, to Jethro in Midian. They had not seen all the wonderful things God had done for his people in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness. But when Jethro heard all these wonders, he called Zipporah and her two sons, and they all went together to meet the Israelites in the wilderness. Moses was very glad to see his family again; and he kissed them, and brought them into the tent, and talked to them. What did they talk about? Moses had much to say; he told them of all God had done to the wicked Egyptians; of the ten plagues he had sent; of his mercy to the Israelites when he destroyed the first-born; of the lamb's blood, sprinkled upon the doors, which saved those who believed. Then Moses told them about the Red Sea, and how the Israelites passed through on dry ground; and about the

destruction of the Egyptians, and the safety of God's people in the wilderness. He showed them the pillar which guided, and the manna which fed the Israelites every day. Jethro was very glad to hear all this; and he blessed and praised God, who had done these great and wonderful things. Then this happy family offered sacrifices together, and thought in faith of the sacrifice, which should be made at some future time, of the Lamb of God, who should come and die for sinners.

In the morning, Jethro went with Moses to the place where he judged the people. Moses was not idle; he had much to do. All the people came to him, to tell him their wants and their sorrows, and to ask his advice. And Moses was not angry with them for coming; he heard them all patiently, and talked kindly to them, and told them what they ought to do, and what they ought not to do. All day, Moses sat to judge the people; he was tired and weary, but not impatient; no, he was glad to be useful to God's people, and did not think about his own comfort. Moses was not selfish. But

when Jethro saw him so tired, and weary, he said to him, "It is not right for thee to judge the people alone; choose some men to help thee. Thou shalt teach the people the holy law of God, and his word and commands; but let the other men help thee, to judge in little things." So Moses did as Jethro said, and chose some good and wise men to help him in his work. Then Jethro took leave of Moses, and Zipporah, and her sons, and went home to Midian. He was sorry to leave them; but he knew they had a powerful and gracious God to keep them wherever they went, who would take care of them in the wilderness, and bring them safely to Canaan.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MOUNT SINAI.

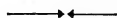
THE Israelites now came into the wilderness of Sinai, and pitched their tents before the mountain. Moses went up into the mountain, and God talked to him there. God said, "Go, and tell the Israelites what wonderful things I have done for them, in saving them from the Egyptians, and bringing them here. They are my own people; and if they will love and obey me, I will keep them always, and give them all they want; and they shall be my children, and I will be their Father." Moses told the people what God said, and they all answered, "We will obey the Lord." Then God said again to Moses, "Go and tell the people to make themselves ready for the third day; for then I will come down upon the mountain to speak to them. They shall not go up, nor touch the mountain; whoever touches it shall be put to death. When the trumpet sounds, they shall come up to the mount." The people obeyed; they all washed their clothes, and made them-

selves ready for the third day. Why? Because God was coming, the holy God; the people were to remember how great and wonderful he is, and how weak and sinful they were; and to come before God with reverence.

In the morning, the Israelites looked towards the mountain; a thick black cloud was over it; and fire, and smoke, and lightning came out of the mountain, and all the ground shook. The people were very much frightened; but the trumpet sounded, and then Moses brought them all out, and made them stand round the mountain. The trumpet sounded louder and louder, and Moses spoke, and God's voice answered him. Then the Lord came down on Mount Sinai, and called Moses; and Moses went up. God said, "Tell the people again, not to touch the mountain; but thou shalt come up, and Aaron with thee." Then Moses went down, and told them.

It was a very fearful thing to see the great mountain smoking, and the fire and lightning coming out of the thick black darkness. Why was it so fearful? Because God was there;

the holy, powerful God ; God who cannot look upon sin, and who has power to punish all those who disobey him. “Our God is a consuming fire.” The Israelites trembled before him ; and we must tremble too, if we have not been washed from our sins in the blood of Jesus. We have no power to escape ; we cannot save ourselves from the anger of a holy God ; but, if we believe in Jesus, we are safe. We need not fear then, because God promises to accept all those who come to Jesus alone for salvation. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”



CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE FIRST FOUR COMMANDMENTS.

THEN Moses and all the people stood round the mountain. They did not see God, but they heard his voice speaking to them. He said, “I am the Lord who brought thee out of the land of Egypt : thou shalt have no other gods but me.” There is only one true God ; he is eternal ; without beginning, without end. He is every where ; he sees all we

do; and he knows all things, past, present, and future. He knows even our thoughts; we cannot hide any thing from him. And he is a holy God; he hates sin, and he says, that all whose sins are not washed away, must perish; because sin cannot be with him in heaven. But he is a very kind and merciful God too; he is a father to us all: he made us, and keeps us, wherever we are, and gives us all we have. But the best gift of God is the gift of his dear Son to die for us; to bear the punishment of our sins; to cleanse us from our iniquities in his blood, that if we believe in Jesus, we may have eternal life. And God gives us another gift; his Holy Spirit, to come into our hearts, to make us holy, because we have no power to make ourselves holy. We are commanded to love and worship this powerful and holy God; God the Father, Son, and Spirit; three persons in one God. We must love him better than all the world; for if we love any thing better than God, we make an idol of that thing. Some people love riches, and make money their idol; some love pleasure, and make the amusements of the world their

idols; and many, very many, poor, ignorant people, in countries where the true God is not known, love and worship images of wood and stone, which cannot help nor save them. We must thank God, who has given us the Bible to teach us about him; and pray to him to help us to love and serve him with all our hearts; and ask him to send Missionaries to heathen lands, to teach poor idolaters to love him too.

The Second Commandment says, "Thou shalt not make any graven images; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them." It is wrong to try to make any likeness or picture of God; he is too holy, too wonderful for us; we cannot tell what he is; he is not like man; he is a spirit and when we worship him, we must worship him in spirit, and remember what a great and holy God he is. The Roman Catholics disobey the second commandment, when they bow to pictures, and images, and crucifixes. We must pray God to pity these poor people, and to teach them, by his Holy Spirit, to worship him in the right way.

The Third Commandment says, "Thou

shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." To take God's name in vain, is to use it irreverently or profanely, or in fraud, dissimulation or hypocrisy. And when we kneel down to pray, we must remember that we are speaking to God, to the holy God, and we must use his name with reverence and godly fear in our hearts, for he will not hear us if we do not pray with our hearts.

The Fourth Commandment says, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." When God had made all things, he rested on the seventh day, and blessed it, and made it holy, and commanded us to keep it holy. And a blessed day it is, of all the days of the week, to all those persons and families who keep it as God would have them. Him that honoureth me I will honour, saith the Lord, and we honour God when we observe his sabbath out of regard to his command. If we do not love the sabbath upon earth, we cannot love the sabbath in heaven; and then, we cannot be ready to go there.

CHAPTER XL.

THE SIX LAST COMMANDMENTS.

THE Fifth Commandment says, "Honour thy father and mother." Parents take great care of their children when they are little. They nurse their poor helpless babies that have no power to take care of themselves; when the children grow older, they teach them to walk, and run about; and when they begin to learn, their parents, if they are good parents, love to teach them about God, and Jesus, and to tell them of his love to little children. Children then must love these kind parents, and obey them in all things. They should run directly to do what their fathers or mothers tell them to do; and they must be very kind and affectionate to them. And when the parents grow sick or old, the children must nurse and take care of them, and do all they can to comfort and make them happy. In some countries, parents do not take care of their little children, but throw out their poor babies to die; and often, grown up children are cruel to their parents when they are old, and cannot help

themselves, and leave them alone to die. But in this happy country, parents and children are taught to love one another.

The Sixth Commandment is, "Thou shalt do no murder." Cain was the first murderer; he killed his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. God commands all murderers to be put to death. They are brought before the judge, and condemned, and executed; and their souls go before God to be judged at his throne. But St. John says, "He that *hateth* his brother is a murderer." Anger, and hatred, and passion, are like murder; people begin by being angry and passionate, and then perhaps they may strike and kill. We must pray God to take away our wicked passions, and to make us gentle, and kind, and forgiving.

The Seventh Commandment says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." When a married man leaves his own wife to live with another woman as his wife, or when a married woman lives with another man as if he were her husband, they commit adultery. Wives must obey their husbands, and try not to make them angry or unhappy. And husbands must love their

wives, and take care of them, and be very kind and gentle to them. Husbands and wives must love, and fear, and worship God together, and teach their families to do so too. Abraham and Sarah lived together in this way; Abraham loved Sarah, and tried to make her happy; and Sarah loved Abraham, and obeyed him; and they both loved the Lord, and he blessed them. God's blessing alone can make happy families; and it is only his Holy Spirit in the heart, that can make people good husbands or wives, good parents or children, good masters, or mistresses, or servants.

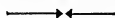
The Eighth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not steal." We read in the Bible about many people who stole; and we hear now, very often, of wicked thieves and robbers. But God's eye is upon thieves and liars. He sees men, and women, and little children too, when they steal; if they do it sily, or in the dark, he can see them; and if their wickedness is not known now, it will all be known in the day of judgment, when the book of remembrance will be opened and read. It will be very dreadful then to be

punished by God, and sent away far from him and heaven for ever. We should pray God to help us always to remember, that his eye is upon us; and ask him to keep us from taking anything not our own. It is wrong to steal even little things. Many children have begun by taking little things, and grown up to be thieves. It is better to die of hunger than to steal. If we are poor, and tell our wants to God, he will give us what is needful, and make us contented, and give us his blessing.

The Ninth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." God says, that all liars shall be sent to hell. He knows the truth, and we cannot deceive him. And this commandment especially teaches us not to accuse others falsely, nor to tell tales of them which are not true.

The Tenth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet." It is wrong to wish for what belongs to other people. God has given us what is best for us, and we must not desire more. He gives riches to some people, and not to others. Why? We cannot tell; but we know that God is wise, and does all rightly;

and we should remember, that it is he who gives us everything we have. If others have more, we must not envy them, nor wish for their money, nor for anything that belongs to them. Coveting is often the beginning of stealing. People see a thing, then they desire it, and perhaps, if God's grace does not keep them from sin, they may at last steal it. We must pray God to give us contentment, that we may not displease him by sinful wishes; for he knows all our thoughts, as well as our actions; he sees our hearts; and our secret sins we cannot hide from him.



CHAPTER XLI.

THE LAW.

WHEN the Israelites saw the lightning, and the blackness of the mountain, and heard the thunders, and the loud trumpet, they were very much afraid, and moved away from the mountain, and stood afar off. They said to Moses, "Speak thou to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die." But Moses said, "Fear not; God is come to prove

you, and to tell you what you ought to do, that you may learn to know and serve him aright, that his blessing may be upon you.” Now, we are helpless sinners before God; our own obedience cannot take us to heaven, for we have disobeyed God many, very many times. How then can we go to heaven? Jesus Christ alone can take us there. He bore the punishment of our sins upon the cross, and his blood can cleanse us; he was perfectly holy, he kept all the commandments; and, if we believe in him, God will accept us for his righteousness’ sake. But we must try to be like Jesus: we must wish and strive to be holy. We cannot become so of ourselves; but God promises to give us the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, and sanctify us. We must ask him for all these things, that we may be made his own dear children by faith in Christ Jesus. And then we need not fear; because God has promised to save all who believe; and we shall not tremble at the day of judgment, when we stand before his throne, because, if our sins have all been washed away in Jesus’ blood, and our hearts made new and clean by the Holy Spirit, we shall hear our Saviour

say, "Come ye blessed;" and we shall be taken up to heaven, away from sin and sorrow for ever.

When God had finished speaking, Moses came and told the people all he had said, and they answered, "We will obey the Lord; we will do what he commands us." Then Moses wrote all the words of God; and the Israelites offered sacrifices unto the Lord. Moses read the book of the law to the people, and they said again, "All that the Lord hath said, we will do, and be obedient." Then Moses took the blood of the sacrifice, and sprinkled it upon the people, to teach them that the blood of Jesus alone could save them, not their own obedience nor goodness; for God will accept only those who are washed in the blood of Christ, who offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins. Then Moses and Aaron, and some of the elders of Israel, went up towards the mountain, and here they saw an appearance of the bright glory of God; but this could not hurt them, because God kept them safely; and they staid there before him, and eat and drank. Then God told Moses alone to come up to him, to receive the tables of stone upon which God had written the Ten Commandments

CHAPTER XLII.

THE GOLDEN CALF.

MOSES waited six days upon the mountain, with Joshua, who attended him; and then God called to him out of the cloud, and Moses went up, and was there in the mount forty days and forty nights. Moses was not afraid to be with God, because he was his father and his friend. We have no need to fear, when our sins are forgiven, and when we are at peace with God through Jesus Christ.

What did God say to Moses when he was in the mountain? He gave him many directions about the tabernacle which the Israelites were to make, where God was to be worshipped; and about the sacrifices, and priests, and the holy things which we shall soon read about; and then he gave Moses the two tables of stone, written with the finger of God. The people waited a long time for Moses, and wondered he did not come down to them, and then they began to be tired and impatient, and they went to Aaron, and said, "Moses is gone away, we do not know what has become

of him; make gods for us, and they shall go before us." Did Aaron tell them how wicked and disobedient they were? No; Aaron sinned too, and let the people sin. He told them to give him their golden earrings which were in their ears; so they brought them to Aaron, and he made them into a golden calf. Then the people said, "These be the Gods who brought us up from Egypt;" and Aaron built an altar, and offered sacrifices to the calf, and made a feast; and the people ate and drank, and played before the image. They had soon forgotten the holy command of God, which he spoke to them from the mount, "Thou shalt not make any graven image." They had forgotten their own promise which they made to Moses, "We will obey the Lord." They had forgotten to ask God's help to teach them to serve him. But did not God see? Was not he angry? Yes; he saw all, for his eyes are in every place; he knew when he was talking to his servant Moses, what his disobedient people were doing; and he said to Moses, "Go down; the people have forgotten me, and they have made a golden calf, and worship it. I am very angry

with these disobedient people; I will destroy them; but I will keep thee, and make of thee a great nation." But Moses prayed God to forgive these sinful people, and to remember his servants Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and his promises to them. Then God heard Moses' prayer, and did not destroy them all.

Moses took the tables in his hands, and went down again to Joshua. Joshua said, "There is a noise in the camp;" but he did not know what the noise was. Moses listened, and said, "It is singing that I hear;" and when they came near, they saw the golden calf, and the people playing, and dancing, and singing before it. Then Moses was very angry, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and broke them under the mountain. Why was he angry? To see that these people had so soon forgotten their kind God, and their own promise to love and serve him. They were poor helpless sinners, and we are so too. When we trust to our own strength and goodness, and forget to ask for the Holy Spirit to help and teach us, we are as forgetful of God, as unthankful, and as wicked as these Israelites

were. Let us pray to God every day to keep us from sin, and to enable us to live always in his fear and love.



CHAPTER XLIII.

THE IDOLATERS PUNISHED.

WHEN Moses saw Aaron, he asked him why he had done this great sin. Aaron did not humbly confess his own wickedness, but tried to excuse himself, and said, "The people gave me their gold, and told me to make gods for them; and I cast the gold into the fire, and there came out this calf." But Moses was very angry; and he took the calf, and burnt it, and ground it into powder; then he sprinkled the powder upon water, and made the wicked idolaters drink it. Moses was very sorry to punish these sinful men; but he knew it was right, because God commanded him; so he cried to all the people, and said, "Who is on the Lord's side?" Then the tribe of the Levites came to Moses, and said, they were. And what did Moses command them to do? He gave them a very fearful command,

but one which must be obeyed; he said, "Take your swords, and go through the camp, and kill these wicked idolaters; your brothers, and companions, and neighbours; spare them not, they must all die." Then the Levites went, and did as Moses commanded; and three thousand men were killed that day.

Then Moses spoke gently to the rest of the people; for he loved them, and wished them to be forgiven, that God might bless them again. Moses said, "You have sinned a great sin; you have made God very angry; but I will now go up to him, and ask him to forgive you; perhaps he will hear my prayer." Then Moses went up, and prayed, and cried to God, and said, "Oh this people have sinned a great sin;" And did God forgive? Yes; God is always willing to hear prayer; always ready to forgive. He told Moses to go down, and lead the people on their journey towards Canaan, and he promised to guide them as he had done before. Then the Lord told Moses, to come up again into the mountain, and to bring with him two tables of stone, like the first tables which he broke. Moses obeyed, and went up to Mount Sinai very early in the morning; and God

came down in a cloud, and stood near him, and talked to him. Moses could not see the bright glory of the Lord ; no living man can see that ; but in heaven we shall see him face to face, and behold his glory for ever.

God passed by Moses, as he stood on the mountain, and spoke with a loud voice. What did he say ? He told Moses, what a good, and kind, and gracious God he is ; a God who loves to forgive, and who saves all who come to him in faith ; but a very holy God too ; a God that cannot look on sin, and who punishes all those who will not repent and turn to him. When Moses heard God speak, he fell down, and worshipped ; and asked that great and holy God to forgive his sins, and the sins of the Israelites, and to make them his own people, and to keep and save them for ever. And did God hear the prayer ? Yes, he promised to keep the Israelites still ; and to give them the good land of Canaan, if they would obey and serve him, and no more make and worship the foolish idols which the people around them served and worshipped.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE NEW TABLES.

MOSES staid in the mountain again forty days; he neither eat nor drank, but God had power to keep him without food; and Moses was happy with his God, and loved to be there. God gave him many commands about what the people must do, and what they must not do; and he wrote again the ten commandments upon the new tables. When God had finished speaking, Moses came down from the mountain; and the people looked at him, and saw that his face was bright and shining; and they feared to come near to him. What made Moses' face shine? The bright glory of God, which rested upon him while he talked to him in the mountain. When Moses saw that it was painful to the people to look at him, he took a vail and covered his face, and then spoke to them; but when Moses spoke to God, he put off the vail.

Moses told the people all the commands of God, and showed them the new tables; and he spoke to them about the sabbath, the holy day

of God, when they must do no work, because it is a day of rest, holy to the Lord. Then he told them about the tabernacle which God commanded them to make, where they were to worship him; and Moses asked them to bring their gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and the skins of animals, and beautiful stones; these things were to help make the tabernacle, and all which was to be in it. The people were glad to bring their riches for the service of God; and many of them were very busy and industrious in this good work. The women spun hair for the curtains, and the men worked the stones, and the gold, and silver; all tried to do something. There was a man named Bezaleel who was very wise in many curious works, in cutting stones, and carving wood. This man loved God, and he was very glad he could do something in his service. He made all the things for the tabernacle, and taught other men to help him, that the work might be done quicker.

It is very pleasant, as well as right, to work for God. All have talents; all can do something. Some people are very wise and learn-

ed; they can do much. They can teach others; and they ought to teach them the things of God, to love and serve him, for that alone is true wisdom. Good ministers work for God, in his church, by preaching and teaching the Gospel, as Bezaleel worked for God in making the tabernacle for his worship. Women can do something: there is no tabernacle to work for now; but they can do much for the poor, by clothing and caring for them; and this is working for God, because he commands us to remember the poor, and to be kind to them for his sake. Little children, too, can do something. Perhaps the Israelitish children helped their mothers to spin the goats' hair, and to carry to their fathers the stones and wood which were wanted. Children cannot do much, but they may be very useful in helping others; and if they work always in the fear of God, and try to serve him in all they do, he will love and bless them. None should be idle; remember, St. Paul tells us not to be "slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

CHAPTER XLV.

THE TABERNACLE.

THE tabernacle was made of boards, with bars put across; and these boards and bars were made of shittim wood covered with gold. At the entrance, there were no boards, but five pillars of shittim wood covered with gold. Within the tabernacle, near the upper end, were four more pillars; a beautiful covering, called the vail, was hung over them; and this hid the inside, which was the most holy place, "the Holy of Holies." None could go in there but the High Priest; and he went only once a year. In the Holy of Holies was placed the ark. The ark was a chest or box made of shittim wood, covered with gold; and there were rings in the sides, for poles to be put in when the ark was moved. The top of the ark was called the Mercy-seat: two golden angels, called Cherubim, were placed one on each side the Mercy-seat; they looked over it, and their wings covered the top. In the ark were afterwards kept the tables of the commandments, Aaron's rod, and

a golden pot full of manna, which God commanded to be put there. Outside the vail, was the altar on which incense was burnt, the table on which the holy bread, called shewbread, was placed, and the great golden candlestick. The tabernacle stood in a large open court; pillars of brass surrounded it, and curtains were hung upon them. The brazen altar for burnt offerings, and the great laver where the priests washed, stood in this court. There were coverings and curtains to the tabernacle and court. Over the boards of the tabernacle was thrown a covering of fine linen, beautifully worked in scarlet, and purple, and blue; over the linen, was a covering of goats' hair; over this, a covering of ram skins dyed red; and another covering of thick skins over all. The people were not allowed to go into the tabernacle: but the priests went in every morning to offer incense, and every evening to light the lamps; and on the sabbath, to take away the old shewbread from the table, and to put on new. The sacrifices were offered in the court, where the people stood.

This was the beautiful tabernacle which God

taught Moses to make for his worship. The things in it were likenesses, or types, of better and holy things. The Holy of Holies was a type of Heaven, that holy place which we cannot now see; and the ark there, with the bright glory shining above it, was a type of Christ. He is now in heaven, and the holy angels stand before him, like the Cherubim over the ark. When the High Priest went into the most Holy Place, he sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice before the Mercy-seat. Jesus is our High Priest, and he offered a sacrifice for our sins before he went into heaven. What sacrifice did he offer? He offered himself; he died upon the cross, and there poured out his blood, and bore the punishment of our sins. And now, like the Israelitish High Priest, he is gone into the Holy Place, not in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle, but into heaven of which that was the type; and there he pleads for us before the Mercy-seat, the throne of God.

When all was finished, God commanded Moses to set up the tabernacle. Then Moses put up the boards and bars, and threw the covering over; and took the ark and put it

into the Holy Place, within the vail; then he placed the table outside, and put the bread upon it; and near the table he placed the candlestick, and lighted up the lamps. He put the golden altar before the vail, and burnt sweet incense upon it; but the altar of burnt offering, and the laver, he put in the court outside. Then Moses and Aaron washed at the laver; and the hangings were put up, and all was finished. A cloud covered the tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord filled it. The cloud was always there by day, and fire by night. When the cloud was taken up, the people journeyed; and when it staid upon the tabernacle, then they rested in their tents.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE PRIESTS' GARMENTS.

WHEN the people were still at Sinai, after the tabernacle was set up, God spoke again to Moses, and gave him many commands about his worship and service. God commanded, that Aaron and his sons should be his priests or ministers. They were brought into the tabernacle, and there consecrated for the holy work. So now, ministers of the gospel are ordained and set apart, before they begin to teach and preach to the people. It is a holy office, and ministers ought to think much about it, and to pray to God for his help and blessing; and the people ought to pray too, that God would give holy wisdom and power to his ministers, and make them faithful teachers of his word. All the Israelites stood at the door of the court of the tabernacle; and Moses brought Aaron and his sons to the great laver, and there washed them with water. The water in the laver had power only to wash their bodies; but it was a type of the blood which cleanseth from sin, and of the Spirit which

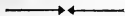
sanctifies, or makes holy. Ministers should be washed in the blood of Christ, and have their hearts made clean by the Holy Spirit.

Then Moses put upon Aaron the holy garments which God commanded to be made; the coat, the girdle, the robe, the ephod, the breastplate, and the mitre. The coat was a long linen robe, with sleeves, and with a girdle worked in blue, and purple, and scarlet. The robe was a long, blue, linen gown, without sleeves; round the bottom were golden bells, and figures of pomegranates; the bells sounded when the High Priest went into the Holy Place. The ephod was a short robe, worked in blue, and purple, and scarlet, and gold; it was made of linen, and round it was worn a beautiful girdle worked like the ephod. The breastplate was made of cloth, and was very thick. It had four rings of gold to join it to the ephod; twelve beautiful stones were set in the breastplate, three in a row; there were four rows of stones, and every stone had the name of one of the tribes of Israel written or cut upon it. The tribes of Israel were the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob. These stones in the breastplate were called Urim and Thum-

mim, that is, very light, perfect and beautiful things. Aaron wore the breastplate upon his heart when he went into the Holy Place, because he was to remember the people there, and pray for them to the Lord. The ministers of the Gospel should always pray for their people, when they pray for themselves.

The mitre was a linen turban, and in the front of it was a plate of gold, on which was written, "Holiness to the Lord;" because the priests, the ministers of the Lord, must be holy in all they do and say, wherever they are. Aaron's sons did not wear all the beautiful robes which their father wore. Only the High Priest had the ephod, and breastplate and robe, and mitre. But Moses put upon the other priests the coat, and the girdle, and the bonnet or turban. All these holy and beautiful garments were put upon Aaron and his sons, to teach them how holy they ought to be, if they were honoured to be priests and ministers of the Lord. Their bodies must be clothed in these rich robes, and their souls must be clothed in the garment of Christ's righteousness, not in their own, for that could not be

accepted by God ; and they must be made new by the Holy Spirit, that their conduct might be pure and beautiful as the garments in which they were clothed. All God's ministers, and all God's people, must be so too ; they must have on Christ's righteousness, and be renewed and be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, or they cannot enter into heaven.



CHAPTER XLVII.

THE PRIESTS.

WHEN Moses had clothed Aaron and his sons with the priestly garments, he took oil, and sprinkled it upon the altar, and the laver, and upon everything in the tabernacle. Then he poured the oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him. The oil was a type of the influence of the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies the ministers of the Lord, and prepares them for their holy work. Afterwards, a bullock was brought ; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon it, humbly confessing their sinfulness before God, and acknowledging that they needed to be washed from their iniquity, and to have a sacri-

fice offered for them. Then the bullock was killed, and Moses took the blood, and sprinkled the altar, and poured it out beneath. Then a ram was brought; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon his head; and it was slain, and the blood sprinkled upon the altar. Another ram was brought; and again Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon his head; then it was killed. Then Moses took the oil and the blood, and sprinkled them upon Aaron and his sons, to sanctify them. The oil was a type of the sanctifying power of God's Holy Spirit in the heart; and the blood was a type of the blood of Jesus, which cleanseth from all sin.

Aaron and his sons were poor weak sinners, as we all are; they needed to have their sins washed away, and their hearts renewed; they needed a sacrifice, as well as the people; and they were taught that the rams, and lambs, and bullocks had no power to take away sin, but that they must look in faith to the great sacrifice which should, at a future time, be offered up for the sins of the world. But Jesus Christ, our High Priest, did not need a sacrifice for himself, because he had no sin

to be washed away. He was all holy; he suffered not for his own sins; but he “was once offered to bear the sins of many.” The priests of Israel soon died, and passed away; but our High Priest continues for ever. He does not, as they did, offer sacrifices daily for sin; one sacrifice was enough, when he offered up himself on the cross: but he still lives; he lives in heaven, in the holy place, and there makes intercession for us.



CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE SACRIFICES AND FEASTS.

VERY soon after Aaron and his sons had been consecrated, they began their holy work. God's ministers and people must not be idle; all have something to do for God, and it should be begun directly. The work of the priests was to offer the sacrifices, and attend to the holy services of God in the tabernacle. The sacrifice of a lamb was offered every morning and every evening. This teaches us, that we need to have our sins washed away every day we live; when we rise in the morning, and

when we go to bed at night, we ought to pray for grace and pardon, and for every blessing which we want. We should thank God for all he has given us, and ask him still to give us that which he sees right we should have. This was what the Israelites were taught to do; and if they prayed in faith, God heard their prayer, and gave them his blessing.

On the sabbath day, two more lambs were offered, besides the morning and evening sacrifices. We should love to worship God every day; but we should pray to him, and think about him, more on Sunday than on other days. The Sabbath is a day of holy rest; it belongs to God, and it must all be spent in his service.

In the beginning of every month, more sacrifices were to be offered; two bullocks, one ram, seven lambs, and a kid. Besides all these sacrifices, there were holy days and feasts, which God commanded to be kept.

There were three feasts in the year, when God commanded all the men of Israel to appear before him. *First*, the feast of the Passover, in remembrance of the angel passing over the houses of the Israelites, when he destroyed the firstborn of Egypt. They were to take a lamb,

and eat it as they did in Egypt; and to offer sacrifices, and to keep seven days holy to the Lord, This feast was in the spring of the year. The paschal lamb was a type of Jesus Christ slain for our sins, to save our souls from destruction.

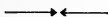
Second, the feast of weeks, or Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover. This feast was in the summer, when the corn was reaped; and the people were then to give some of their fruits, as a thank-offering to the Lord. It is God who gives us all our blessings, and we must thank and praise him for them. The Israelites, in the feast of weeks, were to remember that solemn time when God gave them the law from Sinai, fifty days after they went from Egypt. It was on the feast of Pentecost, that the disciples of Jesus, many years after, met at Jerusalem, when the Holy Ghost came upon them, and gave them power to speak different languages.

Third, In the autumn, the Israelites were commanded to keep another holy time. The feast began by the blowing of trumpets, to call the people to attend. A few days after, was the great day of Atonement. Then they were to remember their sins, and repent, and be sorry

for them. No work might be done; and sacrifices were to be offered, bulls, and goats, and lambs, to teach the people that their sins must be washed away in the blood of the Great Sacrifice, to whom, they must, in faith, look for salvation. And there are days when we should remember our sins, and pray for forgiveness too. Every day we ought to do so, but some days more particularly. The beginning of the year, and our own birthdays, are very solemn times; when we should remember our past sins, and pray earnestly to God to wash them all away in the blood of Jesus, and to give us grace to love and serve him better for the future.

Five days after the day of atonement, God commanded the Israelites to keep the feast of Tabernacles. This was a time of joy for seven days. The Israelites were to gather branches from the trees, palm trees, and willow trees, and to make booths to live in, seven days. The women and children staid at their own houses; but the men dwelt in the booths, praising and thanking God, till the seven days were ended; and then they went home again to their families. The booths were not their

homes; they lived in them only a short time. The Israelites were taught by this, to remember the time when they lived in tents in the wilderness; and to thank God, in their pleasant houses in Canaan, for having brought them safely home. We live on this earth only for a short time; it is not our home, but like the tents of the Israelites in the wilderness, and the booths they lived in for a few days at the feast of Tabernacles. The home of God's people is above, in the Heavenly Canaan; there they will live for ever, and go out no more into a world of pain, and sin, and sorrow.



CHAPTER XLIX.

THE LAW OF LEPROSY.

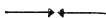
THERE was a very dreadful disease which the people of Israel often suffered from, called the leprosy. It covered the body with sores. It was the business of the priests to examine the leper when he came to them; and if the priests found that the complaint was leprosy, they pronounced the poor man unclean. Then he

rent his clothes, and covered his lips and cried out to all he met, "I am unclean, unclean," to warn people not to touch him, because all who touched the leper became unclean too. The leper lived in a house alone; no one might live with him, except lepers like himself, and all who saw him were afraid to come near. No medicine, no physician, could do him any good; only God himself could cure him. God often punished people by sending this fearful disease upon them; and a very sad punishment it was. But if God was pleased to take away the leprosy, and to make the poor sufferer well, then he was to go to the priest again. The priest examined his skin very attentively; and if he found the leprosy all gone, he took two living birds, and one bird he killed, and sprinkled the blood upon the man seven times, and pronounced him clean; and then he dipped the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed, and let it fly away into the fields. The man that was cleansed went away, and washed, and shaved his hair; and then he might come again among his friends. But after seven days, he went once more to the priest; and he brought with him three lambs,

or, if he was poor, one lamb, and two doves, and flour, and oil. The priest killed the lamb, and put the blood upon the right ear, and thumb, and toe, of the cleansed leper; then the priest took the oil, and did the same with that too. The other offerings were given to God, to thank him for his mercy, and the leper went away clean and well.

We should be thankful that we do not now suffer from this sad disease; but we must remember, that the leprosy was a type of sin, a disease of the soul, which we all have. We are unclean, and cannot come near to God, and live in his love, till our sins are cleansed, washed away in the blood of Jesus. Christ alone, our Great High Priest, can cleanse us from sin; and we must come to him, as the poor leper came to the Jewish priest. He has offered a sacrifice for us; he offered up himself: he is "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." We must pray to have our hearts sprinkled with the blood of him who was slain for us; and then, like the living bird, we shall rise to heaven in faith, and hope, and love. We must ask too, to have our hearts sanctified by the Holy Spirit. The anointing with oil was typical

of sanctification, or being made holy by the Holy Spirit, as the sprinkling of blood was typical of justification, or being accepted by God through the blood and righteousness of Christ. We must live in the love of God, and try to please him in all we do. The leper offered thank-offerings when he was cured. So we should thank God for his kindness to us, when he raises us from sickness, and makes us strong and well again. We need not give God the offerings which the leper gave; he does not want them; but he wants our hearts; all our love, our obedience, all we are, and all we have.



CHAPTER L.

THE JUBILEE.

GOD commanded the Israelites, when they should be safe in Canaan, not to sow their lands every seventh year. The land was to rest that year: they must not plough, nor dig, nor sow, nor dress their vineyards. What would they do for food? They must trust in God; he could

make the land fruitful without their care ; and he promised to keep them, and give them all they wanted. The fruits ripened, and the corn came up ; and then they gathered, and ate, and had plenty. But they were not to be selfish ; they were not to keep the good things which God gave them to themselves : no, they were to divide them among themselves, and their servants, and the poor who had no possessions of their own.

Every fiftieth year among the Israelites was called the year of Jubilee, a time of rejoicing ; the trumpet was blown loudly on the day of atonement, that all the people might hear. If any man had lost or sold his possession, he was to have it again at the Jubilee ; and if a poor Israelite had become a servant, his master was then to let him go, and all that belonged to him. These laws were to teach the people kindness to their neighbours, and trust in God.

And God commands us now to trust to him for all we want, and to be kind to the poor, and to give of what we have to those who have nothing. He still commands masters to be kind to their servants ; to give them what is right, and to be gentle and forgiving when they do wrong. And poor people and servants have

duties too. God commands the poor to be humble and respectful, and grateful to those who give them food and clothing; and servants to be obedient to their masters and mistresses, and industrious in what they have to do. Those are happy families, where all is love: God's blessing is upon them. There is a family above, in which there is no sorrow nor unhappiness, because there is no anger, no unkindness. That family is the family of God in heaven. God is love; the angels are full of love; and God's own people are full of love too; they love him, and they love one another. We must pray God to put love into our hearts now, holy love to him, and to all; that when we die, we may go to that world of love, to live there in peace and joy for ever: then we shall enjoy all that happiness which was typified by the year of Jubilee.

CHAPTER LI.

NADAB AND ABIHU.

THERE were two of Aaron's sons who were priests, whose names were Nadab and Abihu. They were not humble and holy men like their father, but proud and disobedient. Without God's command, they ran into the tabernacle, with their censers in their hands, and offered strange fire, taken from the wrong place, and burnt incense before the Lord. God was very angry with this rebellion, and he sent fire upon them, which struck them dead in a moment. Aaron saw his wicked sons die, and felt very sad. But Moses told Aaron, that God had said he would be sanctified by his priests, and that when they came before him, they must come with reverence: Nadab and Abihu had sinned, and God had punished them, and therefore Aaron and his sons were not to mourn, nor rend their clothes, but submit quietly to God. Then Aaron held his peace: he was full of sorrow; but he knew that God had done right, and humbly submitted to his will: he loved God's house, and law, and glory, more than he loved his poor wicked sons.

How sad it is when good parents have disobedient, ungodly children! Parents cannot give their children new hearts; they can talk to them, and teach them, and tell them what is right, and pray for them; but they can do no more; they cannot save them; only God has power to do that; and therefore the children must themselves pray that their sins may be blotted out, and their hearts made new, and their souls saved; that they may follow their dear parents to heaven.

When Nadab and Abihu were killed, God gave Aaron some new commands, that he might not make God angry, as his sons had done. The High Priest was to go into the holy place, within the vail, only once a year, on the day of Atonement; and then he was to put on the holy garments. He was to offer a bullock for a sacrifice for his own sin, and a goat for the sins of the people, and to sprinkle the blood upon the mercy-seat in the most holy place; and he was to take fire from the altar, and bring it within the vail, and burn incense there before the Lord. Afterwards, Aaron was to go out, and bring another goat alive; and to lay both his hands upon the goat's head, and confess his

sins, and the sins of all the people, and put them upon the head of the goat. Then Aaron was to call a man, and tell him to lead the goat far away into the wilderness, that it might be seen no more. This goat was called the scapegoat. Aaron, the Jewish High Priest, was a sinner like the people, and needed his own sins to be washed away. But our great High Priest, of whom Aaron was the type, needed no sacrifice, because he was all holy. He offered up the sacrifice of himself for our sins, not for his own; and then he went into the Holy Place, into heaven, there to intercede for us before God. And the scapegoat, too, was a type of Jesus. Jesus bore the punishment of our sin; he takes away the sin of the world; "The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." If we humbly come to Jesus, and ask him to take away our sins, he will forgive them all. God will never remember them again; they will be gone for ever. God says to those who come in faith to Jesus; "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

CHAPTER LII.

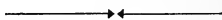
THE MOVING OF THE CAMP.

WHEN the Israelites rested in their camp, waiting for the cloud to move, every one had his own place ; and each tribe was to keep by itself. The tribes were placed in the form of a square ; in the middle, was the tabernacle and the court ; to the East, near the tabernacle, were the tents of Moses, Aaron, and the priests ; and the other Levites, the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites, pitched their tents on the South, West, and North. They were near the tabernacle, because it was their business to take care of it ; to take it down when the camps moved, and to put it up again when they rested. The other tribes pitched their tents farther off. On the East, Isachar, Judah, and Zebulun ; on the South, Simeon, Reuben, and Gad : on the West, Mannasseh, Ephriam, and Benjamin ; and on the North, Naphtali, Dan, and Asher. When the cloud rested, the people rested too ; but when the cloud moved, they were all to be ready for their journey. They had lived nearly a year at Mount Sinai ; and now the cloud was taken up,

and they all began to move. But there was no hurry nor confusion in the camps. All was orderly; every one knew what he had to do. First, the trumpets sounded, and then the three tribes of the camp of Judah began to march. The tabernacle was taken down by the Levites; the Gershonites carried the curtains, and the Merarites carried the heavy boards and bars, and put them safely into waggons. Then the three tribes of Reuben's camp marched on; the Koathites followed, carrying the holy vessels of the tabernacle. Next came Ephraim's camp; and, last of all, the camp of Dan, and all the sick and weak people who were unable to go fast. They journeyed wherever the cloud led them; and when they began to move, Moses prayed God to go with them; and when they rested, he prayed God to stay with them. They were always under his kind care and keeping, and therefore safe wherever they went.

When we journey, we should ask God to go with us too; and if we stay quietly at home, we should ask him to be with us there. While we live in this world, we have to move often from place to place; it is not our rest; it

is not our home: it is like the wilderness where the Israelites wandered so many years. But there is a home above; heaven is like the pleasant land of Canaan which God promised to give his people. Wherever we are, we ought to seek to have God with us; and always to live in his love, that he may smile upon us in every thing we do. Then we shall be happy; he will keep us, and comfort us, and bless us, while we live; and, when we die, take us to the happy home he has prepared for all who truly love and serve him.



CHAPTER LIII.

HOBAB.

WE read before that Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, came to visit him soon after the Israelites left Egypt. Jethro had a son named Hobab, and he stayed with the Israelites all the time they were at Mount Sinai, for that was not far from his own country. But now God commanded the people to move, and go on into the wilderness; so Hobab prepared to leave them, and return home. But

Moses did not wish to lose him, for he knew it would be for Hobab's good to go with the people of God; and he knew too, that Hobab might be very useful in telling them many things which they did not know, about the places in which they would encamp in the wilderness. So Moses said to Hobab, "We are journeying to the place which the Lord said I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good."

And was Hobab willing to go with them? No; at first he was very unwilling. He answered, "I will not go, but I will depart to my own land, and to my kindred." Then Moses tried again to persuade him. He said, "Leave us not, I pray thee; for thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee." The Bible does not tell us that Hobab went with the Israelites as Moses wished, but we may hope he did; and we read of the children of Jehtro living in Canaan many years after; perhaps they were the descendants of Hobab.

But we have something to learn from this story of Hobab. God's people now are, like the Israelites, travelling through a wilderness, and going to a place which God had promised to give them. This world is the wilderness, and heaven is the pleasant land of Canaan beyond. The way which they go is a safe and a good way, and they are guided in it by God's word and God's spirit, just as the Israelites were guided in their way by the pillar of the cloud and of fire. But the people of God do not like to travel by themselves to the promised land; they wish others to go with them. They say to their friends what Moses said to Hobab, "Come with us, and we will do you good." And those friends should be willing and thankful to go; they should say with all their hearts, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

CHAPTER LIV.

THE QUAILS.

THE people now went away from Sinai, and came into the desert of Paran. They were led by the cloud, and kept by God, and, with his love and blessing, they might have been very happy; but these Israelites were like ourselves, weak, sinful people; and soon they began to be tired of serving God, and discontented with what he gave them. When they came to Taberah, they murmured, and made God very angry, and he sent a fire which burnt many of them in their camps. How sad that these sinners should be cut off so suddenly, with their iniquities not forgiven, their hearts not renewed, their souls not saved! "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," for "He is a consuming fire."

Moses prayed to God to forgive the rest of the people, and he heard the prayer, and quenched the fire. But soon again the Israelites began to be discontented, and cried, and said, "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish we eat in Egypt, and the

cucumbers, and the onions, and the fruit: but now we have none; we have only this manna to eat, and we are tired of it; we do not like it." Then they all stood at their tent doors, and wept; and Moses heard them. How foolish and wicked they were! God gave them the manna. He rained it for them from heaven; they had as much as they wished every day; but instead of being thankful, they were discontented, and angry with God's blessings.

Were they wicked? Yes; and let us take care not to be like them. How many people now are unthankful, and discontented with the blessings God gives them, because it is not what they like; they wish for something better, like the fish, and onions, and fruits of Egypt. Let us learn to be thankful for what we have: whatever it is, God sends it, and we sin against him, if we are discontented with his blessings.

But was not God very angry with the Israelites? Yes, and Moses too was angry, and tired of hearing their murmurings. He told God how unhappy he was, and that he had no power to give the people what they wanted. But God kindly comforted Moses, and told him that he would give the people flesh. He had

given them quails before, but only for one day ; now he said they should eat flesh for a month, till they had enough, and were sick and tired of it. Then God sent a strong wind which brought the quails, and they fell close by the camp. The Israelites stood all day and all night, greedily gathering the quails, as many as they could.

They had plenty of flesh now ; but did it make them happy ? No, because they had not God's blessing ; for without his blessing there can be no true happiness. While they were eating the food, God's anger fell upon them, and he sent a plague which killed many of these rebellious people. The Israelites called the name of the place Kibroth Hattaavah, or the graves of those that sinned : and then they journeyed on sorrowfully to Hazeroth.

CHAPTER LV.

MIRIAM'S LEPROSY.

THE people of Israel had sinned very often, and very greatly, and now Aaron and Miriam began to rebel too. They were true servants of God; but, like all of us, they had sinful hearts, and Satan tempted them, as he tempts us now.

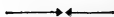
This is a sad world. It is full of evil; full of sin; full of temptation; but we must remember, that God has promised to give us power to resist the devil, though we have no power in ourselves excepting as he gives it. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

What was the sin of Aaron and Miriam? They were angry with Moses; jealous of him, because they thought God honoured him more than he honoured them. They said, "Has God spoken only by Moses, and not by us also?" Moses did not answer; he knew what his brother and sister were saying, but he was not angry; he was meek and gentle, kind, and full of love. When people are unkind to us, we should try to be like Moses,

kind and forgiving; and like the Lord Jesus Christ; he was meek and gentle, and his people should pray to be so too. But God heard the unkind words of Aaron and Miriam, and he was very angry. He called Moses, and Aaron, and Miriam, and told them to come out into the tabernacle; and the Lord himself came down in the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle. Then God spoke angrily to Aaron and Miriam, and said, "Moses is my servant; he is faithful in all my house; and I will honour him, and speak to him face to face. Why were you not afraid to speak against him?" Then the Lord went away, and the cloud was taken from the tabernacle, as a sign of God's displeasure. Aaron looked upon his sister; and what did he see? She was leprous, as white as snow! God had punished her with that dreadful disease, which he alone could cure. Then Aaron was very sorry, and humbly confessed the sin of himself and Miriam, and spoke respectfully to Moses, and asked his forgiveness.

When we have done wrong to others, if we have disobeyed them, or spoken unkindly to them, we should go and confess our fault, and

ask their forgiveness. Moses was ready and glad to forgive his brother and sister; and he prayed God to forgive them, and to heal Miriam of her leprosy, and God heard his prayer. Aaron and Miriam felt their sin, and asked and received pardon from God and from Moses. But Miriam was obliged to live alone, as unclean, for seven days. The Israelites could not journey all that time; they waited till she was well, and till God blessed them once more; and then they journeyed again, and pitched their tents in the wilderness of Paran.



CHAPTER LVI.

THE SPIES.

THE Lord now spake to Moses, and told him to send twelve men, one man from every tribe, to the land of Canaan, which God promised to give to his people Israel. The twelve men were to see if the land was good or bad; if the people there were strong or weak, few or many; and they were to come back again, with some of the fruits of Canaan, to show to the people. The men went away, and came to Hebron, and to

Dayspring.



The Spies.—p. 205.

a place called Eschol; and there they found some beautiful vines, covered with fine grapes. They cut down one branch, and put it upon a pole, and bare it between two upon a staff, as the cluster was so large it could not have been carried for several days by one man, without danger of breaking off many of the grapes. They gathered some pomegranates and figs too; and after forty days, the spies came back again to the camp. All the people wished very much to know what the spies had seen, and to look at the beautiful fruit they had brought. The men said "The land of Canaan is a very beautiful and fruitful country; full of corn, and vines, and honey; but we fear to go there, because the people are many, and they are stronger than we." These men forgot that God was stronger than all, and that he had promised to fight for them, and to give them the land. They had no trust, no faith in their kind God; and they tried to frighten the people, that they might not go to the good land. But two of the spies were not like the others. Their names were Joshua and Caleb. They trusted in God's promise, and did not fear. They said, "Let us go up, and possess the land;

for we are able to overcome it." But the people were very much frightened, and began to weep; they believed the spies more than they believed God, and forgot to trust to his power. Then they murmured against Moses and Aaron, and said, "Why did you bring us away from Egypt? We were happier there than here: we wish we had died in the wilderness. Let us choose a captain, and return to Egypt." Caleb and Joshua spoke gently, and tried to quiet them; but the people became more angry, and began to throw stones at Caleb and Joshua, to kill them. Then they looked up towards the tabernacle, and there they saw the glory of the Lord, and he spoke to Moses with a loud voice. He was very angry: he said he was now tired of his sinful people, and would not let them go to Canaan, but would destroy them in the wilderness. But Moses again prayed for them; he asked God not to forsake the people for whom he had done so many wonderful things; but to forgive them, and spare them still. God heard Moses' prayer, and he promised not to destroy the people directly; but he said, he could not allow them to go to Canaan,

that good land which he had promised to his obedient people. His faithful servants Joshua and Caleb, and those of the Israelites who were now children, should go; but all the others must wander forty years in the wilderness, until they died. Their children would then be grown up, and Joshua and Caleb should go with them to Canaan, without the sinful disobedient parents. The people cried very much when they heard this. It was a great punishment to them. They could never again dwell in a settled home; never see a pleasant country any more; but they must pass all their lives in the desert wilderness.

Sin must be a sad thing for God to punish it so; but the Israelites deserved the punishment. Let us pray that we may not, like them, disobey and rebel against God; and be shut out for ever from the heavenly Canaan above.

The ten men who spoke evil of the land of Canaan, died of the plague before the Lord; but Caleb and Joshua were kept in safety. Then the perverse Israelites, instead of humbly submitting to their punishment, said, "We

will go to Canaan, the land God promised to us." Moses warned them; he told them not to go, because God was not with them, and their enemies would come, and fight against them, and kill them; but the people would not attend. They went to the top of the hill; but Moses, and the ark of God, and the blessing of God, did not go with them.

And had they power to take care of themselves? They thought proudly that they had; but soon their enemies, the Amalekites, came down, and smote them, and drove them away, and thus they were taught and we should learn that all our strength comes from God; and, if he will not help and save us, what can we do?

CHAPTER LVII.

THE SABBATH-BREAKER.

ABOUT this time, while the Israelites were still in the wilderness, another very sad thing happened among them. A man was found gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. The people who saw him, knew how wrong this was; so they took him directly, and brought him to Moses. Moses was very sorry to hear what the man had done; but he did not himself pass sentence upon him. God was the king and judge, and it was his law that had been disobeyed: and therefore Moses went to God, and told him all, and asked what must be done, and how the man must be punished. And what did God say? Perhaps we might think that the man had committed only a little sin, and that God could not be very angry with him for gathering a few sticks on the Sabbath day. But we must remember, God does not look upon sin as we do. He cannot think disobedience to his laws a little sin. The man knew it was wrong to do any work on the Sabbath. - He had stood by mount

Sinai on that dreadful day when the Lord came down upon it in fire, to give his commands to the people; and he had heard him say, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work." The man knew, too, that God had commanded the people to light no fire, and to dress no food, on the Sabbath; and that no manna was sent that day, but a double portion the day before, to teach them how very holy the Sabbath was. The man remembered all this, and yet he dared to disobey the command of God. This was not a little sin, but a dreadful act of rebellion against God; and the punishment of it was dreadful too. "The Lord said unto Moses, the man shall be surely put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones. And all the congregation stoned him with stones, and he died."

This is a sad story indeed! Learn from it how fearful it is to disobey the commands of God; and particularly the command which tells us to keep holy the Sabbath day. Many, very many people break that command, even in

this Christian country. Some buy, and sell, and do their daily work on Sunday, as on other days. And others spend the Sabbath in idle conversation and amusements. But God has told us not to find our own pleasure, nor to speak our own words on his holy day ; and he is angry with those who break the Sabbath secretly, at home, and in their own families. These wicked people, perhaps, may escape unpunished for many weeks, and months, and years ; but all their sin is known to God, and written down in the book of his remembrance. And if they do not repent, they will surely be punished in another world, for breaking God's holy day here. No Sabbath-breaker can be taken to heaven without repentance. Heaven is an eternal Sabbath, and those who dislike and despise earthly sabbaths, will have no place there.

Do you love Sunday ? Do you love holy duties, and holy pleasures, better than any others ? If not, you cannot be fit for heaven. The happy people there will spend eternity in praising God. This is their greatest enjoyment ; but it would be no enjoyment to you, if you do not like to praise and worship God now. If you do not serve him here, you can-

not live with him, and sing his praises hereafter.

Pray to God to give you a new heart, and to make you love him; and then you will love holy things, and holy duties, and holy pleasures, better than all the things of the world. You will be happy while you live; and, when you die, you will go to "that rest which remaineth for the people of God."



CHAPTER LVIII.

THE REBELLION OF KORAH.

Soon after the spies returned, there was a new rebellion among the Israelites. Three men (Levites,) named Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, spoke to Moses and Aaron, and asked why they took so much power and command among the people, and why Aaron was High Priest, and had so much honour. Moses fell on his face when he heard this, and asked help from God to answer these wicked men; and then he said, "God will tell us who are his; he will show whom he chooses to be his High Priest.

Come to-morrow, all of you ; take censers, and put incense in them, and let God show us whom he will choose. You sin against the Lord in being so proud, and rebellious. He has done much for you ; and has honoured you by letting you do his service in the tabernacle ; why do you seek the priesthood, which he has not given you ?” Then Moses was very much troubled, and he went and told his sorrows to God.

The next day, Korah and all his people took their censers, and put fire in them, and incense, and stood at the door of the tabernacle. Then the glory of the Lord appeared, and he spoke with a loud voice, and told all the people to go away from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. All the people moved away, and the three wicked men came and stood at their tent doors, with their wives and children. Then Moses said, “God will now show whom he has chosen, and who are his people, and who have rebelled against him. He will do a new thing ; he will open the earth, and these wicked men shall go down alive into the pit, and perish.” As Moses spoke, the ground shook, and the earth opened, and swallowed up Korah, and

Dathan, and Abiram, and their wives, and children, and tents, and all they had. All went down alive into the great pit, and the ground closed again, and shut them in. Then God sent a dreadful fire, which burnt the wicked men who were the friends of Korah. All the people feared very much, and fled when they heard the cry of those wicked men. But were the Israelites now humbled before God? No; the next day they murmured again, and said to Moses and Aaron, "You have killed the people of God." Then the glory of the Lord appeared, for he was very angry; and he spoke to Moses, and told him to go away quickly, that he might destroy the people in a moment. But Moses and Aaron fell down on their faces, and prayed to God. And then Moses told Aaron to go and make an atonement for the people, and to pray God to spare them. The plague now began among the the Israelites; Aaron took a censer, and put incense in it, and fire from the altar, and ran boldly into the midst of the people. It was a sad sight! Many were dead already, and more were dying; but Aaron loved the people so much that he did not think about his own safety; he only wished to

save them. He stood between the living and the dead, praying to God for his sinful people, and the plague ceased.

When we read this story, we should remember what our great High Priest has done for us. We have all sinned against God, as the Israelites did, and deserve to die, to perish everlastingly. But Jesus has made an atonement for us, to turn away God's anger; and he intercedes for us with the Father. God heard Aaron's prayer, and the plague was stayed. Aaron saved many by his intercession; and Christ is able to save all those "who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

CHAPTER LIX.

AARON'S ROD.

God told the people, that he would now show them whom he had chosen to be his High Priest. He commanded Moses to take twelve rods, and to write upon each of them the name of one of the twelve tribes; and on the rod of the tribe of Levi he was to write Aaron's name, because Aaron was of the tribe of Levi. The rods were dry sticks; there was no life in them. God commanded them all to be put into the tabernacle, before the ark; they were to stay there one night, and God promised to make the rod of the man whom he chose, to bud and blossom, to bring forth flowers and fruit. This was a very wonderful thing to do; but Moses did not disbelieve God, for he knew he had power to do what he pleased; and, in faith and obedience, Moses laid up the twelve rods before the Lord. The next morning, Moses went into the tabernacle and looked at the rods: eleven of them were still dry and withered; but the rod of Levi, on which Aaron's name was written, was full of buds,

and blossoms, and almonds. Moses brought them all out, and called the men to take their rods again. They all looked at the rods; and when they saw that Aaron's alone had budded, they knew that God had chosen him to be High Priest. The Lord told Moses to keep Aaron's rod safely; to put it into the ark, that it might be there always, to shew the rebellious people that Aaron was God's chosen minister. The Israelites were obliged now to submit to the Lord. He had punished them for their rebellion; and he had shown them, by a miracle, whom he had chosen for his priest, that they might not again speak against Aaron. But still these people were not humbled; they cried, and said, "We shall die, we shall all perish." They thought God was unkind to them; and they were angry with his punishments, but not humbled by them.

It is sad when punishment makes sinners angry and rebellious. God sends it to make them repent and turn to him. He wishes all to be saved; he wants none to perish; and, when people forget him, he sends sorrow to them, to make them remember him; to see if

they will confess their sin, and ask for forgiveness. He is ready and waiting to forgive all who come humbly to him; Jesus is willing to save them, and to wash away their sins; the Holy Spirit is willing to come into their hearts, and to make them new and clean. But if sinners still resist and rebel, God will not wait for ever. He will at last cut them off, and send them away from him to everlasting punishment. Then it will be too late to ask for pardon and salvation; for God will not hear their prayer. We must go to Jesus *now*, and all will be well; for he says, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."



CHAPTER LX.

THE DEATH OF MIRIAM.

THE Israelites went on their journey again, and pitched their tents now in one place, and now in another. Sometimes they came very near to Canaan; then God commanded them to turn round, and go back again. They wandered year after year in the wilderness, and were no nearer to the Promised Land than

when they began. Why? Because they had sinned, and rebelled against God; they were to wander in the wilderness forty years, and never go to Canaan.

When they came to Kadesh-Barnea, Miriam, Moses' sister, became ill, and died. We remember reading about her, when, many years before, she sat watching her brother who lay in the river in his little ark. And afterwards, we read of her singing praise to God, when the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea. Miriam was a prophetess; God gave her wisdom to know future things; she was a true servant of the Lord. But Miriam must not go to Canaan. Why not? Because she had rebelled against Moses, and made God angry.

Sin must be punished: God punishes his own people, as kind parents punish their dear children, when they deserve it; not because they hate them, but because they love them so much, and wish them to be good and obedient. God punishes his people to make them sorry for sin, that they may ask from him pardon for the past, and grace for the future. Miriam could not see Canaan, but her soul went

to heaven, the happy country of which Canaan was a type. Miriam's sins we trust had been forgiven, and her heart made new, or she could not have gone there. She is happy now, and will never sin nor sorrow any more. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."



CHAPTER LXI.

THE STRIKING OF THE ROCK.

WHEN the Israelites had buried Miriam in Kadesh-Barnea, they began to murmur again. There was no water to drink, and they forgot their kind God who so often fed them from heaven, and would not trust him. They said to Moses and Aaron, "Why did you bring us here to kill us with thirst? We wish we had died with our brethren before the Lord?" Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the door of the tabernacle, and the glory of God appeared to them. He heard their prayer, and he told them where to go for water, and what they must do. There was a

great rock in the wilderness, and God commanded them to go and speak to that rock, and he said he would bring water out of it. Then Moses took his rod, and he and Aaron called all the people to stand before the rock, to see the wonder that God was going to do. But Moses and Aaron were tired of the rebellion and disobedience of the people, and they became impatient and passionate. This was very wrong; they should have asked God to give them meekness, and gentleness, and patience, and to help them bear with the Israelites. But Moses and Aaron spoke very loudly, and cried to the people, "Hear ye rebels, must we bring water for you out of the rock?" Then Moses smote the rock, and the waters came out, and the people and their cattle drank. But God was angry with Moses and Aaron, because they had not obeyed him, and when they came to Mount Hor, he spoke to them again, and told them that they must die, and not go to Canaan, because they had rebelled against him at the rock Meribah. Aaron must die first; his work was ended, but Moses had much to do still. All God's people have work to do; God gives them strength to do it; and when it is finished,

he takes them home to their rest. And they are not sorry nor afraid to die, no; they are glad to go to a place where they will never sin again.

God commanded Moses, and Aaron, and Eleazer, Aaron's son, to go up to the top of Mount Hor; and there Moses was to take off the holy garments from Aaron, and to put them upon Eleazer, and to make him High Priest instead of Aaron. All three went up; they knew why they went; Aaron knew that he was going to die, that he should never offer sacrifices, and pray for his people again. Aaron knew too, that he must have a sacrifice offered for him, and that he needed a High Priest to intercede for him; and he had faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, who should come to offer up a sacrifice for all the world, the sacrifice of himself. Aaron's sins had all been taken away, his heart had been made new by the Holy Spirit, and he was ready to die. He was sorry that he could not see Canaan, but very glad to go to heaven, a better place than Canaan. Moses took off his brother's garments, and put them upon Eleazer; and then Aaron said

farewell to Moses, and to his son, and lay down on the mountain, and died. Moses and Eleazer went back alone; and when the Israelites saw that Aaron was dead, they wept for him thirty days.



CHAPTER LXII.

THE FIERY SERPENTS.

AFTER Aaron's death, the people went to Kibroth-Hataavah, and then to Zalmonah; and they murmured again, because they were tired of their long wanderings, and of the manna which God gave them. They forgot why it was that they wandered so many years in the wilderness; it was for the punishment of their sin, and they ought humbly to have submitted to it; but their hearts were still proud, and rebellious, and unhumbled before God.

It is very sad to read so often of the murmurings of the Israelites, and of all their disobedience; but we must remember, that our hearts too are like theirs, and we very often make God angry as they did. Many times we have

murmured, and been discontented at what he does. We should pray, every day, for grace to do his will, and for pardon for our daily sins; and remember that our own goodness cannot take us to heaven, but that our only hope of going there is through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

God now punished his sinful people again. He sent fiery serpents among them; and they bit the people, and many died. God has power over all creatures. He could bring quails to feed his people, and now he could bring serpents to kill them. The Israelites came to Moses and confessed their sin, and asked him to pray for them to God. Moses was always ready to pray for them, and God was always ready to hear his prayers, and now he told him how the people must be cured of the serpents' bites. He commanded Moses to make a serpent of brass, and to put it upon a pole; and he said, that all who were bitten, if they looked upon the brazen serpent, should live. The bitten Israelites did as God said, and were cured, and went on their journey again.

We may learn a lesson from the story of the serpents. We are like the poor bitten

Israelites; we are all sick and perishing, not in our bodies, but in our souls. Satan, "the old serpent," destroys the soul, as the fiery serpents destroyed the body. We are all sinners: all in danger of being sent to hell; but there is a way to escape. What saved the bitten Israelites? They looked upon the serpent of brass, and lived. And what can save us? Jesus says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." He was lifted upon the cross, to die there for our sins; and if we look to him in faith, he has promised to save us, and to give us eternal life. He himself, when he was upon earth, said to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life."

CHAPTER LXIII.

BALAAM.

WHEN the Israelites came to Heshbon, they fought with Sihon king of the Amorites. God had commanded all the Amorites to be slain, because they were wicked idolaters; and he promised to give their possessions to his people Israel. The people were now coming into Canaan, and they pitched near Jericho. Very soon God would give them the land; for the forty years were almost ended, and then they were to go and possess it:—not the rebellious and disobedient; they would all be dead; but their children, who were now growing up, should go, and Caleb and Joshua with them.

There was a country, near the land of the Amorites, called Moab: the king's name was Balak. The Moabites heard what Israel had done to the Amorites, and other idolatrous people; and they began to be very much frightened, and thought, that perhaps soon they should be destroyed too. These people did not go to God to help them, they did not ask the

Israelites to teach them what was right, nor forsake their idols, and their wickedness; but they thought they would try to bring evil upon God's people; for they hated them, and wished their destruction.

There was a prophet, but a wicked prophet, who lived a long way off from Moab, named Balaam. Balak king of Moab sent his servants to ask Balaam to come and curse the Israelites; and the servants took money with them to tempt Balaam to go. The messenger went to the wicked prophet and told him what their king said; and when Balaam saw the money, he wished to go with them. He knew that it would be very wicked to curse God's people, and he ought to have sent the servants away directly; but he said to them, "Stay one night, and I will tell you what God shall say to me." In the night, God came to Balaam, and asked, "Who are these men?" Then the prophet told him who they were, and why they came; but God said, "Thou shalt not go; thou shalt not curse my people; for they are blessed." Balaam told the men in the morning, what God said, and they went back to their master. But soon after, Balak sent more

princes to Balaam, and promised to give him great riches and honours if he would come and curse Israel. Balaam knew he could do nothing without God's leave, so he told the princes, that he would ask God again. The Lord saw how rebellious and disobedient Balaam was, and he came to him, and said, "If the men call thee, go; but thou shalt speak only what I tell thee."

Then Balaam was very glad, and he did not wait to be called, but rose early in the morning, and went with the princes. Balaam wished to go, and God let him have his wish; but God's blessing was not with him. Balaam knew he was displeasing God; he knew it was wrong to go to the enemies of the Lord, and curse his people; he knew God had told him at first not to go, and that he was now disobeying him. Was Balaam happy? No—he could not be happy; nothing can make us truly happy without God's blessing. When we wish for any thing, or wish to go any where, we ought to ask ourselves, will God be pleased if I do this? Is it his will that I should do so, or that I should go there? because, if it is not, I cannot have his blessing,

and then I cannot be happy." We should ask God to go with us, and to be with us wherever we are, and then all will be well.



CHAPTER LXIV.

BALAAM'S ASS.

BALAAM rode upon his ass to go to Moab; he thought now he should do as he pleased, and have the money Balak promised him; but God would not give Balaam the power to curse his people; and, without God, Balaam could do nothing. The angel of the Lord came to stand in the way before the disobedient prophet; but Balaam was not thinking of God, and he did not see the angel. But the ass saw, and turned out of the road for fear, and Balaam beat the ass to turn it back again. Soon after they came to a road through some vineyards, with a wall on both sides; and the ass saw the angel standing with a sword drawn in his hand, and pressed close to the wall, and hurt Balaam's foot, and he beat the ass again. Then the road became verry narrow; the angel stood before,

and there was no room to turn, and the ass fell down under Balaam. Then the prophet was very angry, and he beat the poor ass again with his stick ; but it was not the ass that was rebellious and disobedient ; no, it was the prophet who was so wicked, and so foolish, and the angel was sent to him. Balaam did not see the angel, and therefore he was angry, and cruel to the poor ass.

But God has power to do all things, and he did a very wonderful thing then ; he opened the mouth of the ass, and enabled it to speak. Animals have not reason, nor the power of speaking, as most of us have ; God has not given them these things. He has given them instinct ; he teaches them how to find their food, and how to take care of their young. He has made them very useful to man, and he is angry when he sees his creatures used unkindly ; he was angry with wicked Balaam now.

What did the ass say ? It said, " Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden for many years past ? What have I done ? Why hast thou smitten me ? " Balaam was still angry, and he said, " Because thou hast not

obeyed me; I wish I had a sword in my hand, for now I would kill thee." But the ass said again, "I have been thy ass a long time; did I ever do so before?" And Balaam answered "No." Then God opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel standing before him, with a sword in his hand, and he was very much afraid, and fell down on his face. The angel asked, "Why hast thou smitten the ass these three times? I came out to meet thee, because thou wast rebellious and disobedient, and the ass saw me, and turned away. If the ass had not turned away, I should have killed thee, and saved her alive." Then Balaam said, "I have sinned, I did not see thee standing in the way; now then, if thou art displeased, I will go back again." But the angel said, "No, go with the men to Moab, but speak only what I tell thee."

Then the angel went away, and Balaam went on to Moab. But was he sorry for his disobedience? No, he was frightened, but he was not humbled. He could not now curse Israel with his mouth; for God, who enabled the ass to speak, took away from Balaam the power to say what he wished. But his heart was not changed; he was rebellious, and disobedient, and covetous still.

CHAPTER LXV.

BALAAM'S PROPHECY.

BALAAM came to Moab; and when king Balak heard he was there, he went to meet him directly. Balak was glad to see him, and said, "Why didst thou not come before? I am able to give thee money, and honours, and many things, if thou wilt obey me." But Balaam answered, "Now that I am come, I have power to speak only what God commands me."

The next day, Balak brought Balaam to a high place, where they could see the camp of Israel; there the idol Baal was worshipped, and there they built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram upon every altar. When they had finished, Balaam told the king to stay by the altar, while he went to meet the Lord; for Balaam could not speak a word without God's command. God met Balaam, and told him what to say, and then the prophet went back to Balak. The king of Moab was waiting for him, and wishing to hear the curses against God's people. And did Balaam curse them?

No, he could speak only God's words. He said, "Balak king of Moab sent for me to come and curse Israel; but how can I curse the people whom God has not cursed? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" Then Balak said, "What hast thou done? I called thee to curse the people, not to bless them." But Balaam answered, "I told thee I must speak only what God commands." Again Balaam went to meet God, and again God put blessings into Balaam's mouth. He spoke of Israel's happiness, and of their future blessings, when Jesus should come from among them, to be the Saviour of the world.

Who gave Balaam power to prophesy of these things? He had no power himself; he knew nothing of Jesus, he had not God for his keeper and friend; he was a wicked man; he spoke what was right, but his heart was unrenewed, his sins unforgiven. God gave him words, and made him speak blessings of his people Israel; for God had power over Balaam's mouth, as he had over the mouth of the ass. God is able to do all things, and we cannot resist his will.

But it is sad to think of poor wicked Balaam : when he saw God's happy people, he wished to be safe and happy like them ; but he did not pray to be made holy like God's people. They are people who have repented ; whose sins have been washed away, and whose hearts have been made new and clean. God is the friend of these happy people ; he keeps them now, and will take them to heaven when they die.

Balak was very angry with Balaam because he did not curse the Israelites ; he gave him no money, and no honour, but sent him away. Balaam lost God's blessing, and worldly riches too : and soon after, he was slain by the Israelites, when they fought against Midian. Learn from this sad story, how fearful it is to forsake God, and how blessed those are who truly love and serve him.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE DEATH OF MOSES.

MOSES was now a very old man, one hundred and twenty years old. The Israelites were close to Canaan, and soon they were to go there ; but Moses must not go with them. He had sinned, and disobeyed God at the rock, and his sin must be punished. But God was not angry with Moses now. No ; Moses had repented, and looked in faith to the sacrifice which should, at a future time, he made for sin ; “The Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world ;” and he was forgiven, and his soul would go to heaven. But God must punish his servant in this world ; Moses could not go to the good land which God promised to his people. God said to him, “Go unto the mountain Pisgah, and there I will show thee all the land of Canaan ; thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.” Then God told him to take Joshua, and make him the leader of the people, to guide them when Moses was dead. Moses did all God commanded. He took Joshua, and laid his

hands upon him, and blessed him; and God gave him his Spirit, and made him wise and holy, that he might know how to command his people in the right way.

Then Moses called all the people together, that he might speak to them for the last time. They were the children who had grown up in the wilderness; the rebellious parents were dead. Moses spoke to them of all those wonders which God had done for them, and for their fathers, for forty years. This last speech of Moses is written in the book of Deuteronomy. He told them all their past history, since they went from Egypt. He reminded them of God's kindness, and of their sins and rebellions, and of all the laws which God had given them; and then, when he had finished, he taught them a beautiful song of praise to God. The Israelites felt very sad when they heard their dear friend speak to them for the last time, and give them his dying blessing; and it was sad, too, to Moses to say farewell to those he loved. But he knew they had a friend in heaven, who would never forsake them if they truly served him; and he told them to love and obey their kind and holy God. Then he blessed Joshua again, and

told him not to fear, because God was with him to strengthen and protect him ; and then he and Joshua went together into the tabernacle.

And now God called Moses, and told him that the time was come for him to go up to the mountain, and die. God showed him from the mount, all the beautiful country of Canaan, with its hills, and fields, and water, and corn, and vineyards. Moses could not go there ; but he was going to a better country, a heavenly one, where is no pain, nor sickness, nor sorrow, nor sin. Moses lay down on the mountain, and died, and the Lord buried him ; no man knew where, nor how. Then all the people saw that Moses was dead, and they wept for him in the plains of Moab thirty days. Joshua was now their commander ; he was full of wisdom which God gave him, and the people obeyed him, as they had before obeyed Moses.

CHAPTER LXVII.

RAHAB.

AFTER Moses was dead, God spoke to Joshua, and told him not to fear, for he was with him, to strengthen him to conquer his enemies ; and that in three days, he and the Israelites should go over Jordan into Canaan. Then Joshua called two men, and sent them secretly to Jericho, to spy out the land. The men obeyed, and went to the house of a woman named Rahab, and stayed there. Very soon after, the king of Jericho heard that two Israelites were come as spies, and he sent to Rahab, and told her to bring out the men. But Rahab took them, and hid them in the house, and told the messengers that the men were gone, she knew not where ; so the messengers went away to seek them.

When they were gone, Rahab went up to the two Israelites to the flat top of the house, where she had hid them under some stalks of flax, and she said to them, “I know God has given you this land ; I have heard all the wonderful things he has done for you, and I believe

that he is the true God of heaven and earth. I have been kind to you, and hid you from your enemies here ; when you come and take Jericho, be kind to me, and save me and my family from the sword." The spies said, " Yes, when God gives us the land, we will be kind to thee, and spare thee." The woman let them down from the window by a rope, and told them to go quickly to the mountain, and hide there three days, till the enemies were returned. Then the men said, " As soon as we are gone, bind a scarlet thread in the window, that we may remember the house when we see it ; and then we will save thee and all thy family ; but tell no one that we have been here." Rahab promised not to tell, and the men went away, and she bound the scarlet thread in the window.

Rahab was a heathen, and did not know much of the true God ; but when she was told of the wonderful things he did for his people, she believed. She believed he would do what he said, and give the land to the Israelites ; and it was in faith that she hid the spies, and sent them away safely. It was not right of Rahab to say that the men were gone, when she had hid them in her house : but Rahab did not

know that lying is so great a sin as God says it is ; afterwards, when she knew more of God, we may believe that she prayed to be kept from sin, and said as David did, “Remove from me the way of lying.”

We know more than Rahab did, and therefore God will be very angry with us if we disobey his holy commands. We must try to be like Rahab in faith, and kindness to God’s people ; and pray that we may always speak the truth without fear.



CHAPTER LXVIII.

JORDAN.

THE Israelites were now to pass over the river Jordan, and Joshua told them all to be ready the next day. How could they go through ? The river was wide, and there was no bridge. God knew how. He had brought them through the Red Sea, and he could bring them over the river Jordan too. God told Joshua to command the priests to take up the

ark, and to go before the people. When the priests came to the river, and their feet were dipped in the water, then the waters divided, and stood up like a wall; and the priests, with the ark, went through first, and the people followed on dry ground. When they had all passed over, Joshua called twelve men, one of every tribe, and told them each to take a stone from Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood upon dry ground, when the waters divided. These twelve stones Joshua put up in Gilgal, that when, in future times, the Israelites' children should ask, "What are these stones?" their parents might tell them the wonderful story of God bringing his people through the river on dry ground.

How powerful God is, and how kind to his own people! He took care of Israel for many long years; when they were in Egypt, and when they were in the wilderness; and, at last, we read that he brought them safely to Canaan.

And God promises to take care of his people now. He gives them all that he thinks right; he helps them to fight against their sinful hearts, and Satan, who tempts them so

often; and, at last, he brings them to the heavenly Canaan above.

This world is like the wilderness; it is full of sorrow and pain, and between it and heaven there is a river which God's people must pass, that is *death*. But they need not fear; for God promises to be with them there. The ark, which the priests carried, was the type of Christ, and it went over Jordan with the Israelites. And when we come to die, if we are the servants of Christ, he will be with us; he will bring us safely through, and land us in the happy Canaan above.

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE CAPTAIN OF GOD'S HOST.

THE Israelites were now in Gilgal, near Jericho, and there they kept the feast of the Passover. It was a joyful day; and when they eat the lamb, and remembered the night in which God brought their parents out of Egypt, forty years before, and all that he had done for them since, they felt very thankful. They were come to the promised land; God did not

now send them food from heaven, because they had plenty of corn and fruit from Canaan; so they ate no manna again, after the feast of the Passover.

Joshua was one day standing by Jericho, thinking perhaps of the conquest he should, by God's help, soon make of it; and he looked up, and saw a man standing near, with a sword drawn in his hand. Joshua wondered very much who the man was, and he cried out, "Art thou a friend or an enemy?" The man said, "No, but as the captain of the host of the Lord, I am now come." When the captain of the host spoke, Joshua felt that he could not be a man only; and he fell down on his face, and worshipped, and said, "What saith my Lord to his servant?" The captain of the Lord's host answered, "Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place on which thou standest is holy ground;" and Joshua did so.

But who was the captain of the Lord's host? Was he man? No; he came from heaven to help and strengthen God's people. Was he an angel? No; for Joshua would not have been allowed to worship an angel.

Who was he? He was the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who before had appeared many times to his people; to Abraham, and to Isaac, and to Jacob, and to Moses. The place was holy, because God was there. He came to encourage Joshua, not to frighten him. Joshua knew the Lord Jesus, for he often prayed to him; and, when the sacrifices were offered, he looked to him in faith, believing that he would, at some future time, come into the world, and live, and suffer, and die there, to save sinners.

Jesus Christ is always with his people now; they cannot see him with their eyes, as Joshua did; but they see and know him by faith; and when they are in sorrow or danger, he promises to be with them, and to help and comfort them. He says, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

CHAPTER LXX.

JERICH0 TAKEN.

THE Lord told Joshua, that he had given Jericho to him, and that he should conquer and possess it. But how were the Israelites to conquer it? Were they to go and fight against it with swords, and spears, and battering rams? No; God told all the soldiers, and the priests, carrying the ark, to walk round the city once every day, for seven days. Seven of the priests were to carry trumpets; and to blow with them as they passed on before the ark. The last day, they were to go round the city seven times; and the priests were to blow the trumpets, and the people to shout; and then God said, the walls should fall down, and they should go in, and possess it.

The people believed God, and did all he commanded. They walked round the walls once each of the six days, carrying the ark, and blowing with the trumpets; and, on the seventh day, they walked round seven times, and the priests blew the trumpets, and the

people shouted ; and then the walls fell down, and they went up, and took the city. Every body was to be killed in Jericho ; men, and women, and oxen, and sheep, and asses. But the spies did not forget their promise to Rahab ; they went to her house, and brought her out, and all her family, and put them in safety ; and then they burnt the city with fire. All the silver, and gold, and brass, and iron, they saved for the Lord's house ; but the people were commanded not to take any thing for themselves. Jericho was an accursed place, because the people who lived there were so wicked ; and, therefore, all were to be destroyed.

This was very sad ; and it may remind us of something worse—the dreadful punishment of the wicked at the day of judgment. Then, all must perish who have not repented and turned to God. But those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved, like faithful Rahab, in that fearful day. Now, God is asking people to come to him ; and he is waiting to save them ; he is giving them time to repent ; but he will not wait for ever. We should pray God to turn our hearts to him now, while we have life and time ; that, when the

hour of death, and the day of judgment come, we may not fear ; but have God for our friend, and be safe in him.



CHAPTER LXXI.

ACHAN.

WHEN the Israelites were going to destroy their enemies, Joshua had commanded the people not to take any thing for themselves out of the accursed city of Jericho. But one wicked man named Achan, thinking no eye saw him, disobeyed the command, and took some of the riches which he found, and went and hid them. Joshua did not know what was done, and the people did not know ; God alone saw Achan's wickedness ; but he did not tell Joshua of it directly.

There was a city near Jericho called Ai, and the Israelites asked Joshua to let them go there, and take the city. They said, "It is a small place, and we shall soon take it ; we need not all go ; a few soldiers will be enough to conquer Ai." But the Israelites forgot that

they had no power of themselves. It was God who helped them to conquer, and if he hid his face from them, their power was nothing.

A few of the people went up to fight against Ai. Did they conquer? No; their enemies smote and killed many of them, and drove the rest away.

Why was this? Because God was angry, and he was not now fighting for Israel. And why was God angry? Why did he turn away from his people, and refuse to help them? Joshua did not know; but he saw that God was displeased, and this made him very unhappy. He rent his clothes, and put dust upon his head, and fell down on the ground. Was this all he did? No; he did what all God's people ought to do when they are unhappy,—he went and prayed to the Lord. All day he lay before the ark; and he asked God to return to his people again, and to help them as he had done before. The Lord heard Joshua's prayer; for he is always ready to attend to us when we pray, and to comfort us when we are in sorrow. He commanded Joshua to arise, and then he told him why he did not fight for Israel now. He told

him that one man had sinned, and had stolen, and hid his stolen things in his tent; and he commanded Joshua to seek that man, and to put him to death; because God could not fight for his people when sin was among them.

Joshua obeyed directly. He called all the tribes, and all their families, and God helped him to find the right man. Achan was taken. God's eye saw him among all the thousands of Israel, and pointed him out to Joshua. Then Joshua called Achan, and spoke very solemnly to him. Joshua was not angry, but very sorry to think how wicked Achan had been; and now he told Achan to confess his sin, and to pray for pardon, and warned him of the wickedness of denying what he had done. Then Achan confessed all; he said, "I saw, among the riches of Jericho, some silver, and gold, and a beautiful garment; and I coveted them, and stole them, and hid them in my tent." So Joshua sent men to the tent; and there they found the silver, and gold, and the garment, and they brought them to Joshua; and every thing that belonged to Achan they brought too; his wife, and children, and possessions. Then Joshua com-

manded that Achan and his family should be stoned and afterwards burnt with fire. It was a very sad command to give; but these wicked people must be destroyed, or God could not bless Israel. When they were dead, the people went again to Ai; and God was with them then, and helped them to fight; and Ai was soon taken and destroyed.

Joshua built an altar to the Lord; and upon the stones of the altar he wrote the law of Moses. Then the Israelites stood round the altar, and Joshua read to them the words of the law; all God's curses against those who would not obey him; and all his blessings to his own people and servants. The Israelites had much to do at this time; they were busied with their wars and conquests; but they did not refuse to attend.

Whatever we have to do, we ought always to find time for reading God's word, and serving him, and never say we are too busy to attend to holy things. Nothing will go on well without God's blessing. We must seek it every day we live, and in every thing we do. And how thankful we ought to be, that we have the Bible to read, and a kind God waiting to hear our prayers, and to love and bless us!

CHAPTER LXXII.

THE GIBEONITES.

WHEN the wicked nations of Canaan heard of what the Israelites were doing, of all their conquests, and their great power, they came together to fight against Joshua and his men. It was wicked, and foolish too, to try to fight with God's people. God had promised to give Canaan to the Israelites, and to help them to conquer their enemies; and those wicked Canaanites fought in vain against his will. But there were some of these people who did not wish to fight with Israel, because they felt it would do no good, and they were in great fear that Joshua would kill them. These people were the Gibeonites. It was right of them to feel their own weakness, and God's strength, and to wish to be at peace with his people; but they did not seek for peace in the right way. They knew that Joshua was not commanded to fight with the people who lived far off, but only with those who lived in Canaan; so they determined to deceive him; and to

pretend to have come from a country very far off, and to ask him to make peace with them.

So the Gibeonites took their asses, and put sacks upon them, and in the sacks they put dry mouldy bread; the skin wine bottles which they carried were broken, and their shoes and clothes old and torn. The Gibeonites soon came to the camp of the Israelites at Gilgal, for it was not far from them, and asked to speak to Joshua. They said, "We wish to make peace with you; we are come a long way to see you." The Israelites answered, "Perhaps you are Canaanites, and we must not make peace with them." The Gibeonites said, "No, we are not Canaanites; we come from a country very far off; we have been travelling many days, and are tired with our long journey; you see our dry bread, and our broken bottles, and our old shoes and garments; all were new when we began our journey; but now they are worn out, because we have been so long a time on the road. When we were in our own country, we heard about you, and about all that you did to the kings of Heshbon and Bashan, and we were

afraid you would destroy us also; so we are come now to ask you to be at peace with us, and we will serve and obey you."

This story was not true; but Joshua believed it; so he did not ask God to tell him what he ought to do, but he made peace with the Gibeonites, and promised not to destroy them. Then the Gibeonites were much pleased, and went home again. But two or three days after, the Israelites heard that these people, with whom they had made peace, were Canaanites, and lived very near to them. Then the Israelites were vexed, and angry too, and they said, "What shall we do? These Gibeonites are Canaanites, and we ought to kill them; but we cannot, because we have promised not to hurt them, and we must keep our promise."

So Joshua called for the Gibeonites, and said to them, "Why have you deceived us? Why did you say you came from a very distant country, when you knew you lived close by us? You have done very wrong to deceive us so wickedly. We promised not to kill you, and we will keep our promise; but we will punish you for your deceit; you shall be our servants, and do all our hard work for

us; you shall cut our wood, and draw our water, and help us in the work we have to do for the house and altar of God." The Gibeonites said, "We were so very much afraid that you would kill us; fear made us deceive you; we are willing to be your servants; do not kill us, and we will do all you say." Then Joshua promised again not to hurt them; but he made them servants to the Israelites, hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for all the people, and for the altar of God.

Were the Gibeonites right in what they did? No; lying cannot be right: fear ought not to make us deceitful. They ought to have come and confessed the truth to Joshua, and trusted to him to do what was right; and if the Gibeonites had repented, and given up idolatry, God would not have rejected them. Joshua did wrong, perhaps, in not asking God to tell him what answer to give. We are all ignorant, and cannot of ourselves do any thing right or wise; and, therefore, we ought to ask God to teach us what to do. But it was very right of Joshua to keep his promise to the Gibeonites. It is wicked to forget a promise; it is like lying. God always re-

members his promises, and he commands us to remember ours. The Gibeonites were punished for their sin; but it was a great mercy to them not to be destroyed. They were allowed to live with the Israelites, and they could now learn to worship the true God. It is a blessing to be with those who love the Lord, and we ought to be glad and ready to be useful to them in any way, and not think it a trouble to do the work which is given us. The Gibeonites were servants to the Israelites, and they were willing and obedient. Servants now should try to be like them, humble and respectful; and, if their masters serve God, they should be very thankful that they live with those who will try to teach them what is right, and to lead them in the way to Heaven.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

THE KINGS CONQUERED.

Soon after Joshua had made peace with the Gibeonites, the wicked kings of the Amorites heard of it, and went to Gibeon to fight against it, because it had made peace with the Israelites. The Gibeonites were very much frightened when they saw these kings, and their armies, coming to fight them; but they knew where to go for help; they sent to Joshua, and asked him to come and save them from their enemies.

When we are in sorrow and danger, it is very pleasant to have kind friends to comfort and help us; but there is only one friend who has power always to save us from all evil, and to fight for us against our worst enemies, the enemies of our souls. Who is that friend? It is the Lord Jesus Christ; he is "a Friend at all times," and he tells us to call upon Him in the time of trouble.

Did Joshua go to help the Gibeonites, or did he say he would do nothing for people

who had been so deceitful? No, Joshua had promised to be kind to them, and he did not forget his promise now they were in trouble: he went directly, and all his soldiers with him. He was right to go; we ought always to be willing to help those who ask our help; and if people have done wrong to us in time past, we should be ready to forgive and forget all, and be kind to them when they are in sorrow. But Joshua and his men of themselves could not do much; God alone could conquer the enemy, and he promised he would. He said to Joshua, "Fear not; for I am with thee."

The kings were soon conquered, and fled from the Israelites; and many of their soldiers were killed with hail stones, which God sent from Heaven to destroy the enemies of his people. God did a wonderful thing that day: Joshua and the Israelites were many hours fighting, and they feared darkness would come on, and then they would not know where to find their enemies. But Joshua had great faith in God; he knew he could do every thing, and that he had promised to do great things for his people; so Joshua asked God to do a very wonderful miracle then, a new miracle

never seen before. What was it? Joshua spoke to the Lord, and said, "Sun, stand thou still in Gibeon; and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon." And did the sun and moon obey? Yes, because it was the will of God that they should; it was his power, not Joshua's, that made them stand still, and he gave the command in answer to Joshua's prayer. The sun and the moon stayed as they were all that day; hour after hour passed, and the sun and the moon were in the same place still, until all the enemies of Israel were conquered. How wonderful God is! How great his power is, and his kindness too, to his own people! We may safely trust him in all dangers, if we love and serve him; but we must remember that he has power to destroy his enemies, as well as to save his friends.

The wicked kings fled, and hid in a cave; they thought Joshua could not find them there; but they could not save themselves. Joshua soon heard where they were, and he commanded his people to roll great stones to the mouth of the cave, to keep the kings in, till all his enemies were conquered. And

when the Israelites had finished fighting, Joshua brought out the kings, and slew them. It was sad to kill so many people, but it was God's command. The Amorites had long sinned against God, and now they must be destroyed. God's enemies will all perish at last. He waits a long time for them to repent and turn to him; but, if they will not, he will cast them away for ever. Then let us pray to God to make us his people; to give us new hearts, and to help us, by his Holy Spirit, to love and serve him. And then we shall be safe and happy, and have God for our friend for ever.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE DIVISION OF CANAAN.

MANY years passed away. Joshua and the Israelites spent those years in fighting with their enemies; and God helped them, until almost all the land was conquered. Joshua was now an old man, and God called to him, and said, "Thou art old, but all the land is not yet possessed: soon I will give the whole country to my people Israel, as I promised; and now divide the land, and give possessions to all the tribes." Joshua obeyed, and gave to each tribe a part of the land; but he gave none to the tribe of Levi. Why? Because they served in the temple; their possession was the sacrifices offered to the Lord, and they wanted no more. But forty-eight cities, in different parts of the country, were given to them; there they lived, and had schools where the young Israelites were taught to worship and praise the Lord. The tribe of Reuben, and the tribe of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, had their possessions on the other side of the river Jordan. They had

asked Moses for that part, because they liked it best; and Moses had said, "If you will come over Jordan with us, and help your brethren to fight against their enemies, you may have possessions where you wish; but you must not live idly here, while the others are busy fighting: when the land is all possessed, you may return, and you may leave your wives and children here now, but you must go over Jordan, and help your brethren." Then the three tribes promised to obey, and they did as Moses said; and now, when their enemies were conquered, they went home to live in peace. The Israelites were very glad to have those quiet possessions in their beautiful land. How good God had been to give it to them, and to keep them in so many dangers, and to bring them safely to their homes at last!

And does God give no possession, no home, to his people now? Yes, and a better home, a better possession than Canaan: but it is not in this world. The home of God's people is in Heaven; their possession is there. Canaan was a type of Heaven; and beautiful as Canaan was, Heaven is much, much better. Do we

wish to go there? We have enemies as the Israelites had, and we must conquer them before we can have our heavenly possession. Satan is an enemy, the world is an enemy, our own sinful heart is an enemy. How can we conquer them? In our own strength, by our own power? No, we are not able; we are poor weak creatures; we cannot save ourselves. We must do as the Israelites did; we must ask God to fight for us, and to make us conquerors by his power, not our own. Jesus Christ is better and stronger than Joshua; and, if we ask him in faith, he will save and deliver us from all our enemies, and bring us in safety to our happy home in heaven.



CHAPTER LXXV.

THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

THE Israelites now all assembled at Shiloh, and there they set up the tabernacle; for this was the place God had appointed; and here the sacrifices were to be offered.

There were six cities, among the forty-eight belonging to the Levites, called cities of Re-

fuge. They were in different parts of Canaan, and their names were Kedesh, Shechem, Bezer, Hebron, Ramoth, and Golan. These cities were appointed by command of God. Why? We read in the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt do no murder;" and God told Moses that murderers must be punished with death. But sometimes, a man might kill another without wishing to do it; without being angry, or hating the person he killed; he might kill him by accident; he might throw a stone when he did not see any one, and the stone might fall on the head of a man, and kill him. Was the man who threw the stone a murderer? Must he be put to death? No, God did not wish this; that man was not like a cruel murderer who hates his neighbour, and waits slyly for him, and at last kills him. God made a way of escape for the manslayer. The manslayer was to run directly to one of the cities of refuge; he was not to wait; if he were found on the road he might be killed: he was to run to the city, and the Levites there would take care of him; but he was not to go out of the city till the High Priest died, and then he might return

home. The roads to the cities of refuge were broad and smooth; the man slayer could run very quickly along them; there were bridges over the rivers and streams; and, at the cross roads, large stones, and the words, "Refuge, Refuge," written upon them. So the manslayer had no need to stay to ask his way, and he could always escape to the city of refuge, and be there safely before night. But if he lingered on the road, or staid to rest, the friends of the dead man might overtake him, and kill him; and nothing could save the manslayer then. He was safe in the city of refuge, and there alone.

The cities of refuge were typical of the safety we all want. Poor sinners are, like the manslayer, in danger of perishing, if they do not fly for safety. Why are they in danger? Because they have sinned against God's law which says, the soul that sins must die, die eternally in hell. But is there no escape? Yes, there is one way, and that way is by Jesus Christ; he is our refuge. If we run to him, believe in him, pray to him, ask him to save us, we are safe, as safe as the poor frightened manslayer was in the re-

fuge city. But if we do not fly to Christ, we can have none to save us; and then we must perish. Let us go to him directly, without waiting or lingering. He is always ready to receive us: he says, he will not cast out those who come to him. But, if we linger, we may perish before we reach the place of safety, and where shall we be then.



CHAPTER LXXVI.

THE NEW ALTAR.

WHEN the Israelites were settled in Canaan, they wished to have their tabernacle set up, and the worship of God established among them. So they all came together to the city of Shiloh in Ephraim, and there they brought the ark, and set up the tabernacle. The sacrifices were to be offered there, and there alone. But when the tribes of Reuben, and Gad, and Mannasseh, went to their homes beyond Jordan, they built a new altar there, a very large one by the river. The Israelites soon heard of what the Reu-

benites, and Gadites, and Manassites had done, and they were very angry, because they thought these three tribes wished to rebel against the Lord. Many of the princes of Israel, and Phinehas, the son of Eleazer the priest, went directly to the tribes beyond Jordan; and the Israelites all made themselves ready to go and fight against them if they would not obey. Then the princes spoke to the three tribes, and said, "Why have you made this altar? Do you not know that Shiloh is the place where God's tabernacle is? Do you wish to rebel against God, and to bring punishment upon us all?"

The three tribes waited patiently till the princes had finished speaking, and then they said, "We know that in Shiloh alone it is right to offer sacrifices; that is the place God has chosen, and we do not wish to rebel. We built our altar, not to offer sacrifices upon it, but to remind us and our children of the worship of the true God. Perhaps our children may say, "We are far off from Shiloh, we have nothing to do with the service of God. When they say that, we will show them our altar, and tell them it is like the altar which our

fathers made by God's command, and that we serve the same Lord that they served." Then Phinehas and the princes were pleased, for they were very glad that their brethren wished to serve the Lord, and not to rebel against him.

It was right of the Israelites to be so fearful of rebellion and disobedience to God's commands. We should try to serve God aright ourselves, and teach our friends to serve him aright too, and warn them when they are wrong. But the three tribes were not wrong; and so when we see our friends loving and serving God, we should be very glad, and rejoice with them, and live in love one with another.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

THE DEATH OF JOSHUA.

God had now given rest to the Israelites a long time, and Joshua was very old, and felt that he must soon die. He loved his people very much; and he wished to talk to them, and bid them farewell. He called them all to Shechem, and spoke to them there for the last time. The Israelites felt very sad when they looked upon their dear old friend whom they had known so long, and they stood very attentively to hear all he said. Joshua told them of all God's kindness to them in past years, his love to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and his mercy to the Israelites in Egypt. Then Joshua told them to remember all the wonders God had done to their enemies, the Egyptians, and the Amorites, and many more people whom God had given them power to conquer.

When Joshua had finished, he asked, "Now tell me, whom do you wish to serve, and worship, and obey? Will you serve the idols of the Amorites, and the Egyptians; or

God, the true God, who has done all these things for you?" Then all the people answered, "We will serve the Lord." But Joshua said, "You are not able of yourselves to serve him rightly, for he is a very holy God; he hates sin, and he punishes all those who rebel against him." But the people cried again, "We do wish to love and serve the Lord." Then Joshua told them to throw away all their idols, and to pray to God to help them to serve him aright. Joshua wrote their promise in the book of the law; and then he took a large stone, and put it up under an oak tree, and called the people, and said, "Look at that stone; it has heard your promise that you will serve the Lord. Here it is, a remembrance of what you have done."

Then Joshua sent the people to their homes, and, very soon after, he went to his home in heaven. He had lived many long years, one hundred and ten; he had fought many battles, and done many wonderful things by God's power; but now all was finished, and he lay down to rest in the quiet grave. Joshua was glad to go to a better country than Canaan; he did not fear death, because his sins were forgiven,

and his soul saved. He had lived in the love of God, and now he was going to be with God for ever. The Israelites were sorry to lose their kind teacher; and they tried to remember all he had said to them, and did not forget their holy promise to serve the Lord. It is a happy thing when people choose God for their friend, and not the world. But we cannot serve him without his Holy Spirit to teach us. We must ask him for his grace to help us to fear and love him, and for forgiveness of all our sins through Jesus Christ.



CHAPTER LXXVIII.

KING EGLON.

THE Israelites remembered their promise for a few years, and served God, and would not worship the idols around them. But after a time, they forgot God, and Joshua, and all he had said to them, and their own promise, and began to rebel against God again. Why was this? Because they were poor weak sinners, and did not ask God to help them to serve and obey him. And we too are, like the Israelites,

weak and sinful ; and without God's grace, we shall do wrong as they did. Our dependence is on God ; and, therefore, we ought to ask for God's help every hour we live.

The Israelites forgot God, but he remembered them still. One day, when they were worshipping their idols, they saw an angel coming to them from God. He came to tell them of their sin, and of God's anger. He told them of their disobedience and rebellion ; and said, that now God would not be with them, to help them to conquer their enemies, but would leave them to themselves. This was very sad, and all the Israelites wept for sorrow. They had no friend, no father, no kind God now, because they had forsaken him, and he had turned away from them. But the Israelites knew that God would hear prayer, and they went and prayed to him. They confessed their sins, and asked for forgiveness, and offered a sacrifice, looking in faith to the Lamb who should come and die for them, whose blood, "cleanseth from all sin." Were they right to do this? Yes ; when we sin, we can have pardon in Jesus, and by him alone : and if we pray to him in faith, he promises to take away our sins, and to renew our hearts by

his Holy Spirit. God heard the Israelites' prayer. He gave them judges; wise men who helped them to conquer their enemies, and taught the people to love and serve the Lord.

But again the Israelites did wickedly, and then God sent cruel enemies to fight against them; and they felt what a sad thing it was to make God angry, and they cried to him, and he heard them. Eighteen years they served Eglon, the cruel and wicked king of Moab. At last, God sent the Israelites a man to help them, whose name was Ehud. The Israelites had a present to send to Eglon, and they asked Ehud to take it to him. Ehud made a dagger, and hid it under his clothes, and went to Moab. When he came to the king, he said he had a secret thing to tell him alone; so Eglon sent away his servants. Eglon was sitting in his own room, a summer parlour which was very cool and pleasant; and he thought himself safe there, for he did not know why Ehud had come. When they were alone, Ehud took out his dagger, and thrust it into the king's body, and killed him; and then Ehud ran out of the room, and locked the doors, and escaped. None saw Ehud go; and when the servants found the

doors locked, they thought their master was asleep; so they did not go in. Many hours passed, and then the servants began to wonder why the king did not send for them, and, at last, they took a key, and opened the door. What did they see? The king lying upon the ground, dead!

Ehud soon came back again, bringing many soldiers with him; and the Israelites fought against the Moabites, and conquered them. It was God who delivered the people of Israel from their cruel enemy, and he was pleased to do so by the hand of Ehud. We must not think, from this story, that it can ever be right to deceive and murder even our enemies; but we may learn from it, that when the people of God are in danger, and pray to him for help, he can find a way to deliver them from their trouble, and to give them peace and safety.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

DEATH OF SISERA.

WHEN Ehud was dead, the Israelites again rebelled against God; so soon they forgot all his mercies, and their own promises to love and obey him. God, therefore, punished them again. He cannot let his people sin, and take no notice: he is like a kind parent who punishes his disobedient children in love, to make them better, not because he hates them.

God sent Jabin king of Canaan to fight against Israel, and conquer them. He was very cruel, and they suffered much under his power for twenty years. God did not fight for them then, because they had rebelled, and made him turn away from them. How sad it is to be in sorrow and suffering without God to comfort us! The Israelites felt this, and they remembered their sins, and repented, and cried to the Lord to forgive and help them. And did God attend to these rebellious people? Yes, for he is so merciful that he never sends away any who humbly pray to him.

There was a very good woman living at that time, named Deborah. She dwelt under the palm tree between Ramah and Bethel; and there she prayed, and sang praise to God, and talked to and taught all the people who came to see her. She was a very wise woman; God had given her the best wisdom, the knowledge of himself; and he taught her to prophesy; and to know the future, that she might tell the Israelites what they must do, and how they could be delivered from their cruel enemy Jabin. When the Israelites began to cry to God, Deborah, at his command, sent for a brave man, named Barak, and said to him, "Go now, and call men out of the tribes of Zebulun and Napthali, and take them to fight against Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army; for God promises to give us the victory." Then Barak said, "If thou wilt go with me, I will go;" so Deborah went with him, and ten thousand men, to fight against Sisera. But Deborah told Barak, that he should not kill Sisera, but that God would give the wicked captain into the hands of a woman.

So Barak and his army went and fought against Sisera; and soon the Israelites had

the victory, because God was with them. Then Sisera came down from his chariot, and ran away on his feet to escape from Barak. There was a man named Heber who was at peace with Jabin; and Sisera ran to Heber's tent for safety. The name of the man's wife was Jael. When Jael saw Sisera coming, she went out to meet him, and said, "Come in, come in, fear not." So Sisera came in, and lay down; and she covered him with a mantle. Then he asked for water to drink; and she gave him milk, and he drank, and lay down again. Then he said, "Stand by the door, and if any one ask if I am here, say no." Sisera was soon asleep, for he was weary with fighting and running so far, and then Jael went very softly, and took a large nail, and a hammer, and hammered the nail into Sisera's head, and down into the ground, while he slept, and killed him; he never spoke nor moved after, but died directly. Soon after, Barak came to the door of the tent, and Jael called him in, and showed him his enemy lying dead upon the ground.

It was not right in Jael to be sly and deceitful; but it was very merciful in God to

deliver his people from their enemies, and to destroy their cruel captain. Barak and Deborah felt that it was the Lord, not themselves nor their soldiers, who had gained the victory, and they sang a beautiful song of praise to him. How glad the Israelites were to be in peace again! War is a sad, sad thing. If we live in peaceful country, let us thank God for it; because it is he who gives us peace, as well as all our other mercies.



CHAPTER LXXX.

THE MIDIANITES.

FORTY years passed happily and safely; the Israelites lived in the fear of God, and he kept them in peace, and gave them rest from their enemies. When nations serve God, then they have his blessing; he does them good, and gives them all they need; and they become happy and strong, and none can make them afraid. Solomon says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation." It is God's blessing that makes people

truly happy; not riches, nor power, nor possessions.

When the forty years were passed, the Israelites began again to do evil; and then new sorrows and punishments came upon them. God sent the Midianites to be their enemies. These people came in great numbers; they brought their camels and their cattle with them, and pitched their tents in the possessions of the Israelites; and the Israelites left their pleasant houses and fields, and ran to hide in dens and caves, for fear of the cruel Midianites. When the grass, and corn, and fruit grew up in the fields, these enemies took all away for themselves, and for their cattle; and the pleasant land began to look barren and desolate, because the Midianites tried to destroy it. Then the Israelites cried again to the Lord, for they knew that he could deliver them, and he alone. God sent an answer to them by a prophet. He had not forgotten his people, but he was very much displeased with them; and the prophet came to tell them this. He said, "Thus saith the Lord, I brought you safely out of Egypt, and delivered you from the cruel Egyptians, and drove away your enemies, and gave you the land of

Canaan for a possession ; and I command you to obey and serve me, and not worship the idols of the people who live near you ; but you have not obeyed my command.” Then the prophet went away ; God sent no kind promise of forgiveness to his ungrateful people, for he wished them to feel sorry, and to know how sad it is to be without his love and blessing. And did God give up the Israelites to their enemies ? Would he hear their prayers no more ? No, God was very merciful ; he was angry with his people, but he did not forsake them. He had heard their prayers, and now he was going to save them.

There was a man who lived in Ophrah named Joash, and he had a son named Gideon. Gideon was a true servant of the Lord ; but his father was an idolater, and worshipped Baal. One day, Gideon was threshing wheat in a very secret place, for he was afraid that the Midianites would see him, and come and take his corn from him ; and then he and all his family might die of hunger. Gideon had many sorrowful thoughts as he threshed the wheat ; but his sorrow did not make him idle. He trusted in God for deliverance ; but he knew that it was his

duty to be industrious, and to try to do all he could to help himself. Gideon had no friend to comfort him; his family worshipped Baal; he alone loved and served the true God. And did God forsake his faithful servant in the time of sorrow? No; Gideon looked up, and saw an angel near him, sitting under an oak; the angel was come to comfort him, and to deliver his country. Gideon heard him say, "The Lord is with thee." How glad he was to know this! He had no need to fear nor be unhappy, if the Lord was his friend.

If we are God's people, then the Lord is with us too. When we are alone, in sorrow or in danger, though we may have no friends on earth, yet we still have God to comfort us. He is always near. We cannot see the Lord Jesus Christ nor hear his voice speaking to us; but we can look upon him by faith, and read what he says to us in his holy word, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

CHAPTER LXXXI.

GIDEON.

WHEN Gideon heard the angel say, "The Lord is with thee," he looked up with wonder, and said, "Is the Lord with us? Then why does he let the Midianites come and destroy us? Why does he not work miracles for us, as he did for our fathers, and deliver us from our enemies?" The Lord said, "Go now, I send thee to save Israel from the Midianites." Gideon was fearful; he had faith in God, but his faith was weak and small; and he could not believe that he should save Israel. "How can I save my brethren?" he said; "I am poor; all my family are poor, and I am the least in my father's house." But the Lord answered, "I will be with thee; I will give thee power to smite the Midianites."

Gideon now began to think that it was not a man, nor an angel, who was talking to him; for neither a man nor an angel could give him power to conquer his enemies; and he said, "Wilt thou give me a sign, that I may know who thou art? Stay till I come again, and

bring my offering with me.” Then Gideon went into the house, and made ready a kid, and cakes of flour : he put the flesh into a basket, and the broth into a pot, and brought all out to the oak tree where the angel was waiting. The holy angel did not want food to strengthen him, as poor, weak, sinful men do ; but he accepted Gideon’s offering, and told him to lay the flesh and cakes upon the rock, and to pour out the broth. Gideon knew not why, but he obeyed ; and then the angel of the Lord touched, with his staff, the flesh and the cakes. and fire came out of the rock, and consumed them. The angel departed ; Gideon knew not how, nor where ; but now he knew who the angel was. Then Gideon cried with holy fear, “ Alas, O Lord God, for I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face.” But God comforted him, and said, “ Peace be unto thee ; fear not, thou shalt not die : ” and Gideon named the place “ Jehovah-shalom,” or “ The Lord send peace,” and built an altar there to the Lord.

Gideon was young and poor, but God did not forget nor despise him. Gideon wished to serve the Lord, and prayed for help and strength, and God heard his prayer. God does the same now.

He says, "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." He wishes the young to come to him; to believe in Jesus, to pray to him, to love him, to give him all their hearts, all their affections. Like Gideon they are weak and ignorant; and, in their own strength, they cannot fight against their enemies, the enemies of their souls, Satan, and the wicked world, and their own sinful passions; but, if they ask Jesus for strength, he will say to them, as he did to Gideon, "I will be with thee." Then every thing will be well with them, and God will give them peace in all their fears and sorrows.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

BAAL'S ALTAR.

THE night after Gideon had seen the angel of the Lord, God spoke to him again. There was much for Gideon to do, and he must not be idle; he must show all the idolatrous people around him, that he loved and served the true God. God said to him, "Take thy father's bullock, and throw down the altar of Baal which thy father has, and build an altar to the Lord, and offer the bullock in sacrifice upon it." Gideon's family all worshipped Baal; they might be very angry if the idol altar was thrown down; perhaps they might kill Gideon. Was he not afraid to obey God? No; Gideon knew that he ought to fear God more than men. He knew that God had promised to be with him, and that he had power to keep him safely from all his enemies. So Gideon rose directly; he thought it best to destroy Baal's altar in the night, because he feared the men of the city might try to prevent him, if he waited till morning. He was right; when we have work to do,

we should always do it directly ; the sooner the better.

When the people rose next day, they wondered to see Baal's altar thrown down, and a new altar to God ready built, and a bullock offered upon it. Then they asked, "Who did all this?" and soon they heard that Gideon had done it. He was not afraid to confess the truth ; he was bold, because he knew God was with him. But the people were all very angry with Gideon, and they said to Joash, "Bring out thy son, that he may die." How sad it was that these wicked idolaters should wish to hurt and kill God's faithful servants !

Satan's people have often tried to destroy God's people, in all ages of the world : many holy martyrs have suffered death, because they would not worship idols, nor obey the wicked commands of men. These faithful servants of God, like Gideon, were not afraid to confess their belief in the true God. They thought it better to obey God and die, than to disobey him and live. They trusted boldly in him alone, and then they went to cruel, painful deaths, peacefully and happily. We ought to be very thankful that wicked men have not power now

to persecute and kill us : and we should pray, that if, at any time, we should be obliged to suffer for Christ's sake, we may have faith, and patience, and holy boldness, like those good men.

But was Gideon killed ? No ; God had given him work to do, and he helped him to do it, and did not let his enemies hurt him. Joash was not angry, but kind and gentle to his son ; and he said that all who tried to build again the altar of Baal, should be put to death, because Baal was a vain, foolish idol, and could not save himself. All the Midianites and Amalekites were now gathered together at Jezreel ; but Gideon did not fear them, because God's Spirit came upon him ; and he blew a trumpet, and called together a great many soldiers, and made them ready to fight.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

THE LITTLE ARMY.

BEFORE Gideon began to fight, he asked God to promise to save Israel from the Midianites. He said, "Give me now a sign, that I may know that thou wilt be merciful to the Israelites. I will put a fleece of wool upon the ground to-night; in the morning I will look at it; and if I see the fleece wet with dew, and all the ground dry, then I shall know that thou dost promise to save us from our enemies." Gideon put the fleece of wool upon the ground, and God heard his prayer. In the morning, when Gideon looked at it, it was very wet, and he wrung from the fleece a bowl full of water; but there was no dew upon the ground.

We know that the moisture in the air, which we cannot see by day, becomes cool at night, and turns to dew. But why was the fleece alone wet and every thing else dry? Because God had heard the prayer of Gideon, and he wished to show him that he can do all things, and to teach him to trust in him. The next night, Gideon asked God to let him try the

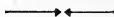
fleece again. He said, "To-night, let the fleece alone be dry, and all the ground wet, and then I shall know that thou wilt save Israel." God again attended to Gideon; and the next morning, all the ground was wet with dew, and the wool alone was dry. Was this wonderful? Yes, it was a miracle God alone could do; and when Gideon saw it, he felt that he might trust his powerful, kind, and wonderful God. His faith was strong now, for he thought, if this powerful friend were with him, he need not fear the Midianites.

Gideon was not going to fight alone; he had many thousand men with him. But God wished to teach the Israelites, that their soldiers had no power to gain the victory, and that he alone could save them; and so he told Gideon to say to the soldiers, that if they were afraid, they might return home, and not come to the battle; and twenty-two thousand went away. They could not have had much faith in God, nor much holy courage; they were weak, fearful men, who would not have helped Gideon to fight against the enemy. The army was small now; only ten thousand men; but God said, "I do not want so many; if all these soldiers go, the

Israelites will say that their own power and courage gained the victory. Bring the ten thousand down to the water, and let them drink; attend to the men who lap the water like a dog, and put them on one side; and the men who kneel down to drink water, put on the other side; and I will tell thee whom I choose to fight against the Midianites.” Gideon obeyed God, without murmuring, or asking why. He brought all the soldiers to the water, and told them to drink. A few of them lapped, putting their hands to their mouths; but all the others stooped down on their knees to drink. Gideon counted these who lapped; they were three hundred. Then God said, “By the three hundred men who lapped will I save you, let all the others return home.

Gideon had a very, very small army now. The Midianites were in great numbers; the Israelites only three hundred. Was he frightened? No, he had no need to fear, for God was with him, and he was stronger than all. Perhaps when Gideon looked upon the great army of the Midianites, he felt fearful; but when he looked up to God in faith and prayer, his fear was gone, because

he knew he might trust in him. Try to be like Gideon; and when you are in trouble, or sorrow, or difficulty, look to God for deliverance, and to him alone.



CHAPTER LXXXIV.

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE BATTLE.

IT was night. To-morrow, Gideon and his army must go and fight against their cruel enemies the Midianites. How did Gideon feel? A battle is a very dangerous thing. Gideon could not tell who might be killed; perhaps he might die, perhaps some of his dear friends; but he did not fear, because God was with him, and had promised him the victory. Captains and commanders of armies may be quiet and happy, if they are ready to die; they need not be afraid in the most dangerous battle, if God be with them.

While Gideon was lying down to rest, and his three hundred soldiers by him, he

heard a voice calling to him. Who spoke? Was it an enemy come to kill him and his little army? No, it was no enemy, it was Gideon's best Friend who spoke to him,—it was the voice of God. When all are asleep, the eye of God is still open; He never sleeps, but watches over his people, and keeps them in safety. How pleasant it is to be the people of God, and to have our kind Father and Friend to take care of us, when we are sleeping upon our beds, in the long dark night!

But why did God speak to Gideon? He came to comfort him. God knew all Gideon felt; all his fears and sorrows were remembered by him; and now he came to encourage him before the battle began. God said to Gideon, "Arise, go down to the army of the Midianites. If thou fear to go alone, take Phurah thy servant with thee; go and hear what the Midianites say, and afterwards thou shalt feel strengthened to go down to the army." So Gideon and his servant Phurah went directly, as God commanded. They went, without fear, very near to their enemies, because they knew that God was

with them, and would keep them safely. The tents of the Midianites and the Amalekites covered all the valley; they were very, very many. The soldiers were sleeping in the tents, and their camels lay by them; they were so many, Gideon could not count them. But the Midianites were not all asleep; some were keeping watch, and some were making ready for the morrow, and some were talking; but none of them saw Gideon and his servant. There were two men, Midianites, talking together, and Gideon and Phurah went near to them, to hear what they said. One man was telling his dream to his friend; he said, "I dreamed that I saw a cake of bread tumble into the hosts of the Midianites:

I saw it fall upon a tent, and the tent was overturned, and thrown down." His friend answered, "That cake of bread is Gideon, the commander of the Israelites; he will fall upon us, and destroy our tents, because God is with him." When Gideon heard what the man said, he rejoiced, and thanked and worshipped God. He felt now sure of the victory. Then he and Phurah went back to the Israelites, and Gideon said, "Arise, for God gives the Midianites into our hand."

God who gave peace and comfort to Gideon and his little army, put fear and sorrow into the hearts of the Midianites. He sent a voice of love to his friends; he sent fearful dreams to frighten his enemies. How sad it is to be an enemy of God, and to lie down to sleep at night, having his frown upon us, and not his smile! To-morrow these poor Midianites might be killed in battle, and they were not ready to die! When we go to bed, we know not if we shall rise again. Then let us never lie down to rest without praying God, that if we should wake no more in this world, we may be taken to be with him for ever in heaven.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

GIDEON'S VICTORY.

GIDEON divided his army into three companies, and gave every man a trumpet, and a pitcher, and a lamp in every pitcher. They had no swords, nor spears, nor bows, nor arrows. They had God to fight for them, and they did not want arms. Then Gideon said, "Come with me, and do as I do. When I blow with the trumpet, you must blow too, and cry, "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." The people did not murmur at Gideon's command, for they were humble and obedient servants and soldiers of God. He had taught them to trust and to obey.

It was still night when Gideon went again, with his soldiers, to the camp of the Midianites. They all stood round the camp; and when Gideon commanded, they blew with the trumpets, and broke the pitchers, and cried aloud, "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." The Midianites heard the noise, and the shout, and were very much frightened, for God had made

them fear. They knew not what to do; they were like wild mad men. They all fell one upon another, and killed their own friends, and fathers, and brothers, and those who were not killed fled away, and the Israelites followed after them, and killed them. Gideon took the two kings of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb, and put them both to death, and cut off their heads. Then he came to Jordan, and took two more kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and killed them.

When Gideon had gained all these victories, the Israelites came and thanked him. They felt very grateful for all he had done, and they said, "Come and rule over us, and be our king, and we will serve and obey thee." But Gideon was not an ambitious man; he did not want power, nor riches, nor possessions; he wanted only to be useful. We read in history about many great conquerors, who fought battles, and conquered enemies, and gained victories, because they wished to be rich, and powerful, and to have great possessions; they were ambitious, selfish men; they thought only of pleasing themselves, not of pleasing God, nor of being useful. But Gideon was not like these men. He was a

servant of God; and God's servants must be meek and humble, like Jesus Christ. So when the Israelites asked Gideon to be king, he said, "No, I do not wish to rule over you; the Lord is your king; obey him." But Gideon asked them to give him all the earrings and gold chains, which they had taken from their enemies. The people said, "Yes, we will willingly give them;" and they spread out a large garment, and threw into it all the earrings and chains they had, a very great number, and purple garments, and many more beautiful things. Gideon took all, and made them into an ephod, like Aaron's ephod, and took it into his own city Ophrah. Gideon made the ephod in remembrance of his victory. He was right to remember God's kindness in giving him the victory, but it was very wrong to make an ephod, a holy garment which God commanded the priests alone to wear.

This was the beginning of idolatry. The Israelites now learnt to worship in their own way at Ophrah, and not in the right way at Shiloh, the place appointed by God. Gideon was a good man, but when he trusted in his own strength, he did wrong. The best people sin, very, very often, and should always be

coming to God to ask for pardon for the past, and grace for the future. If Gideon sinned, we may believe he prayed for forgiveness, and that God heard his prayer, and pardoned him. But it must have grieved him very much to see his family and his people learning idolatry through his sin. He died a very old man, and was buried in his father's tomb at Ophrah.



CHAPTER LXXXVI.

ABIMELECH.

AFTER Gideon was dead, the Israelites again forgot God, and worshipped idols. They had none now to warn them, and they were glad to have their own way. It is very sad to read about Israel's sins; but we must remember that we sin too. We do not worship images, as the Israelites did; but we often forget God, and love the world, and ourselves, and our pleasures, better than we love him. If we love any thing better than we love God, we make an idol of it. Many people make idols of money, and possessions, and self; and they serve them, as the Israelites served Baal.

Gideon had many sons, but they were not like him. The name of one was Abimelech. He was a very ambitious man, and wanted to be king. He went to Shechem, and asked the people there, to let him reign over them. The men of Shechem were pleased with Abimelech, and they attended to what he said, and gave him money, and promised to make him king. Then he went home to Ophrah, and called his brothers together, and killed them upon one stone ; all but the youngest, named Jotham, who hid himself and escaped. Why did Abimelech kill his brothers ? Because he feared they might wish to reign too, and he wanted to be king alone. What a sad thing ambition is !

When the brothers were dead, the men of Shechem made Abimelech king. He reigned three years ; and his poor brother Jotham lived far away from him, because he was afraid of Abimelech. Was Abimelech very happy when he was king ? No ; wicked men cannot be very happy ; power and riches cannot make them so.

The people in Shechem soon grew tired of their cruel king. God remembered all that Abimelech had done to his brothers ; and now

he was going to punish him. The people in Shechem rebelled, and would obey Abimelech no more. So Abimelech came and fought against them, and conquered the rebellious Shechemites. Some of them escaped to an idol temple, and hid there. But Abimelech and his soldiers cut down boughs from the trees, and put the boughs under the place where the people were hid, and set it on fire; and the people were all burnt to death. Then Abimelech went to a city named Thebez, and tried to take it. The people in Thebez went up to a high strong tower; and Abimelech was under the tower, fighting against it. Then a woman on the top of the tower took a very large millstone, and threw it down upon Abimelech's head. Abimelech was much hurt by the stone, and felt that he must soon die, and he cried to a soldier near him, "Thrust thy sword into me, and slay me; for I will not let people say that a woman killed me." So the soldier thrust his sword into him, and Abimelech fell down dead. God punished this wicked, proud, ambitious man, and all the wicked people who had helped him.

It is a fearful thing to make God angry; he always punishes his enemies. Perhaps he spares them a long time, and lets them live many years in sin and cruelty; but if they do not repent, he must punish them at last. He sees the wicked things people do, and writes all down in the book of his remembrance. All our sins are there; and in the day of judgment it must be opened, and read before the world, and before the holy angels. What can blot out our sins from that book? The blood of Jesus Christ alone. Ask forgiveness then from him; and pray that your name may be written in the book of life, with those of all his people who love and serve him.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

JEPHTHAH.

THERE was a man in Gilead named Jephthah, he was very brave and warlike; but his brothers did not love him, and they sent him away, and would not let him live with them. Some years after, the Ammonites came and fought against Israel. Then the men of Gilead were very much frightened, and they sent for Jephthah, to help them to conquer their enemies. How very selfish these Gileadites were! When they were in peace and safety, they could be unkind to their brother; but now, when they were in danger and sorrow, they wished to have him to help them, and spoke kindly to him. Brotherly love, which the Bible teaches us, is *always* kind. We ought to love our friends, not because they are useful to us, but because God says, “Be ye kind one to another.”

When Jephthah heard what the messengers said, he answered, “Did you not hate me, and send me away; why do you come to me now when you are in trouble?” But the Gileadites promised to make Jephthah their captain, if he

would come and fight for them. So Jephthah went to them.

The Ammonites were very wicked people. They had always been enemies to Israel, and God commanded that they should be destroyed, and he promised to give their possessions to the Israelites. Jephthah sent to the Ammonites, and told them this; but they would not attend. Then Jephthah made ready to fight against them. But before he went to the battle, he asked God's help, and made a promise to God, and said, "If thou wilt give me the victory, then the first thing I meet at the door of my house, when I return in peace, shall be the Lord's; and I will offer it up for a burnt offering." The marginal translation reads, "*Or* I will offer it up for a burnt offering. Jephthah was very right to ask God's help; but he made his vow without seeking direction from God, and we shall soon see into what trouble it brought him. Jephthah could not know what would come to meet him; and, therefore, it was foolish to promise to offer it to God.

The Ammonites were soon conquered, and very many of them killed, because God fought

for the Israelites ; and when the battle was ended, Jephthah went home again to Mizpeh. Jephthah had one child, a daughter ; he had no more children, and she was very dear to him. This daughter loved her father very much ; and when he went to fight, no doubt she prayed that God would keep him safely, and bring him home in peace. And when she heard of the victory, she thought she should soon see her dear father again. And when she saw him coming, she ran out to meet him, dancing and singing for joy. Was Jephthah glad to see her ? No, he was very sorry ; he rent his clothes, and cried, “ O my daughter, thou troublest me ; for I have made a promise to the Lord, and I cannot break my vow.” But his daughter said, “ My father, if thou hast made a vow to the Lord, do to me as thou hast promised, as he has given thee victory over the children of Ammon.”

Poor Jephthah ! He thought now of his foolish vow, and was sorry that he had made it. He must give up his dear daughter, and never see her again ! But first, she asked to go upon the mountains, and to mourn there with her friends. Her father let her go ; and, after two months, she came home again, and Jephthah did with her as he had vowed.

What did he do? The Bible does not say. Some think he killed her in sacrifice; perhaps he sent her far away, alone, where she could spend all her time in the service of God. If he sacrificed his daughter, Jephthah did very wrong, and sinned greatly against God. God does not want such sacrifices; he only wants praise, and thankfulness, and love. God says, "Thou shalt not kill," and he could not be pleased if Jephthah killed his daughter. Jephthah had made a rash vow, and had it been any other person who had met him and been the victim it would still have been a dreadful thing, but the punishment for his unauthorized vow would not have been so striking, nor the warning to us against such rash promises so solemn.

Jephthah's daughter was an obedient, affectionate child; she was willing to be given up to God; to die or to live, as her father pleased. We should try to be like her in obedience and devotedness to God. He does not wish us to be sacrificed, nor to live alone, far away from our friends and homes; God does not wish all this; but he wants our hearts, our love; he wants us to obey his will, and to be ready to live or die as he pleases.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

MANOAH.

JEPHTHAH judged Israel six years, and then died. And now the people began again to sin against the Lord, and he gives them up to their enemies the Philistines for forty years. This was a long time to be in sorrow and trouble ; but the Israelites deserved punishment. Many times they had displeased God, and now he shewed them again the evil of sin, by letting them suffer. But God did not forget his people, though he punished them ; he knew how to deliver at the right time, and he had a deliverer ready to save them when he pleased.

There was a good man in the tribe of Dan, named Manoah. He and his wife both served God. They had no child. One day, an angel of the Lord appeared to Maaoh's wife, and said, " Soon God will give thee a son, who shall deliver Israel from the Philistines. No razor must come upon him, for he shall be a Nazarite unto God."

Who were the the Nazarites? They were people who had made a vow to give themselves to God. They did not drink wine, nor any strong-liquor; and they never cut their hair, nor shaved their heads.

Manoah's wife wondered very much to hear what the angel said, and she went and told her husband. Manoah believed it all, for he had great faith in God. He knew nothing was too wonderful for God to do; and he felt very thankful for God's promise to deliver Israel by the child who should soon be born. But Manoah feared that he and his wife might forget what the angel had said, and not bring up their child rightly; so he prayed God to send the angel to them again, to tell them what they must do. When we feel our own ignorance, we should ask God to teach us what is right. We are all ignorant, and cannot do any thing as we ought; but God is ready to give us holy wisdom; if we ask humbly for it, as Manoah did. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given him."

God heard Manoah's prayer. A few days after, a woman was sitting alone in the field, and she looked up, and saw the angel again

standing by her; then she ran directly, and called her husband. Manoah followed his wife, and came to the angel, and asked, "What shall we do to the child when he is born?" The angel told them what he had told the woman before, and then Manoah said, "Stay here till we have made ready a kid for thee." The angel answered, "I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt offer a sacrifice, offer it to God." Manoah did not know who the angel was, and he asked again, "What is thy name?" But the angel answered, "Why dost thou ask my name? It is a very secret, and a very wonderful name." Then Manoah offered a kid in sacrifice to the Lord upon the rock, and God sent fire upon the sacrifice to consume it, and Manoah and his wife looked at the angel, and they saw him going up to heaven in the flame of fire. Then they both fell upon their faces in holy fear and wonder, and Manoah said, "Now we shall die, because we have seen God."

Yes, it was not a created angel, who had appeared to them. But they had no need to fear; he came to comfort, not to frighten them. The woman said to her husband, "If the Lord were

pleased to kill us he would not have just now shown us wonderful things, and accepted our sacrifice." They are happy people who have Jesus for their friend, as Manoah and his wife had.



CHAPTER LXXXIX.

SAMSON'S FEAST.

MANOAH and his wife did not afterwards see the angel of the Lord; but God remembered his promise, and very soon gave to them a little son, and they called him Samson. Samson's parents were very careful to attend to all God's commands about him. They remembered that he was to be given to God; that he was to drink no wine; and not to shave his head, nor cut his hair. Samson was wonderfully strong. God had given him great strength, because he had much for him to do; he was to deliver Israel from the Philistines.

When Samson was grown up, he went to Timnath with his father and mother, to marry a young woman who was a Philistine. As he passed the vineyards of Timnath, a lion

rushed out of the woods, and began to roar against him. Was Samson frightened? No; he ran to the lion, and tore it to pieces, without a stick, or sword, or spear; with his great strength alone. Samson said nothing to his father or mother, but went on, and came to Timnath.

After a time, Samson passed again along the place where he had killed the lion, and he went and looked at the dead body of the animal. What did he see there? Some wild bees had made their nest in the lion, and Samson found much honey there; so he took it, and eat, and gave some to his father and mother; but he did not tell them where he found it.

Samson made a feast at Timnath; and when the company were all talking merrily together, he said, "I will give you a riddle to guess; if you guess right, I will give you thirty sheets, and thirty garments; but if you cannot guess, you shall give me thirty sheets and thirty garments." Then the people said, "Tell us the riddle and we will try to guess it." Samson said, "Out of the eater came forth meat; and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

The eater was the strong lion; and the meat was the sweet honey Samson found in it: but no one knew the story of the lion, and they could not guess the riddle. They tried six days, and then they called their friend, Samson's wife, and said, "Ask Samson to explain the riddle to thee, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire." The woman urged her husband so strongly, that at last he explained the riddle to her, and she went directly, and told the Philistines. Then they came to Samson, and said, "What is so strong as a lion, and what is so sweet as honey?" But Samson said, "My wife told you, or you could not have guessed my riddle."

The Philistines were wicked and very hardened men, to threaten to murder Samson's wife and destroy her father's family, if she did not find out her husband's secret and tell them. What a dreadful thing sin is! Oh, that we may hate it as we ought.

CHAPTER XC.

SAMSON AND THE PHILISTINES.

SAMSON was obliged to give what he promised to the men who so sily found out his riddle. But how did he get the garments and the sheets? He went down to Ashkelon, and killed thirty men of the Philistines, and took from them what he wanted to give to the men who told the riddle. Soon after, Samson's wife was taken away from him, and then Samson began to be very angry with the Philistines. He caught 300 foxes, and tied firebrands at their tails, and drove them into the corn fields belonging to the Philistines; and all the corn, and vineyards, and olives, were burnt. Then the Philistines asked, "Who did this?" The people said, "Samson did it, because his wife has been taken away;" and the Philistines went, and burnt Samson's wife and her father with fire. Then Samson was still more angry, and he killed a great number of the Philistines, and then went to the top of a rock, and lived there.

The Philistines now went to fight against Judah, and they said they must have Samson, and bind him, and take him prisoner. The people of Judah were frightened, and they went up to Samson, and said, "We are come to bind thee; we will not kill thee, but we will give thee into the hands of the Philistines." Then they bound him with two new ropes, and led him away. But God gave Samson strength to break the ropes, and he soon escaped, and took up the jawbone of an ass, which he found on the way, and with it killed 1000 men of the Philistines.

After the slaughter, Samson was very thirsty, and he cried to God; and thanked him for deliverance, and asked for water, that he might not die of thirst. It was right of Samson to go to God in his troubles. We ought always to tell him when we are in want, and ask him to give us what is right. God heard Samson's prayer. He caused water to spring up like a well, and Samson drank, and became strong again.

It is sad to read the story of Samson; there are so many quarrels, and so much fighting, and killing, and murder in it. God raised up

Samson to deliver his country from the Philistines, and he gave him great strength, and boldness, and courage to do it. Samson was not so meek, and gentle, and kind, and holy, as many people of whom we read in the Bible. But we may hope he was not without the fear of God in his heart, and truly repented of all his sins; and that Samson was a true servant of God, and trusted in him for strength to fight against his enemies.



CHAPTER XCI.

SAMSON TAKEN.

Soon after, Samson went to Gaza. The people heard he was there, and they waited quietly for him all night, and said, "In the morning we shall kill him." But Samson arose in the night, and went to the gate of the city, and took it up, and the posts, and the bar, and carried them upon his shoulders to the top of a hill near Hebron. What wonderful strength Samson had! Who gave it to him? God, who gives us all our good things. And why

did God give so much strength to Samson? Because he had chosen Samson to conquer the Philistines, and to deliver his people Israel. God had commanded Samson not to cut his hair; it was very long, and while his hair was long, he was strong; but if his hair should be cut, he knew he would soon become weak like other people: but Samson told no one his secret.

Samson went to live with a bad woman; her name was Delilah. She was a Philistine. The Philistines wanted very much to know what made Samson strong, and they went to Delilah, and said, "Ask Samson what makes him so strong, and how we can bind him; and we will each give thee 1100 pieces of silver." Delilah was very fond of money; so she went to Samson, and asked him to tell her what made him so strong. Samson did not wish her to know, and he deceived her, and said, "Let them bind me with seven fresh green withs." Then Delilah told the Philistines, and they brought the withs, and she bound Samson with them, and the Philistines waited secretly hid in the room. Then Delilah cried, "The Philistines are upon thee, Samson;" and Samson broke the withs

directly, and the Philistines could not bind him. Then Delilah asked Samson again, to tell her what made him so strong; and he said, "Let them bind me with new ropes." Delilah bound him with the ropes, and cried again, "The Philistines are upon thee, Samson," and he broke the ropes like little threads, and escaped again. Then Delilah said, "Now do not deceive me, tell me the truth; how shall I bind thee?" He said, "Weave the hair of my head with the web." When Samson was asleep, Delilah wove his hair, and fastened it very strongly; then she told him the Philistines were coming, and he awoke directly, and went away with the pin, and the beam, and the web. Then Delilah said, "Why hast thou deceived me these three times? Tell me now where thy great strength lies?" Samson was tired of her asking him so often; and he now told her all the truth. He said, "I am a Nazarite to God; and I have never shaved my head; but, if my hair is cut off, then I shall become weak like other men." Then Delilah sent to the Philistines, and said, "Come once again; Samson has told me the truth; I know now what it is makes him so strong."

The lords of the Philistines were very glad to think they should soon have their enemy in their power; and they came directly, and brought money with them to give Delilah. Then the cruel woman, when Samson was asleep, called a man, and told him to shave off all Samson's hair; and when he had finished, Delilah cried, "The Philistines are upon thee, Samson." Samson arose, but his strength was gone; God had taken it all away. He could not defend himself now; and his enemies came, and took him, and put out his eyes, and bound him in chains, and carried him to Gaza, and made him work hard in the prison there.

Poor Samson! He ought not to have told his secret, nor to let his hair be shaved, because God had commanded that no razor should come on his head. God punished him by taking away his strength. Delilah was his deceitful wicked enemy. How careful we should be to choose for our friends and companions those persons, and those only who love and fear God.

CHAPTER XCII.

SAMSON'S DEATH.

SAMSON was now in the prison at Gaza, alone and blind, without any friend to comfort him. He had much time then to think about God, and to pray for the pardon of all his sins. God often afflicts his people; but he afflicts them in love. He wants them to pray to him, and to love him more. When they are well and busy, they often forget God; they think too much about worldly things, and too little about heavenly things; and then God sends affliction to make them remember him. Perhaps he makes them lie many days upon a bed of sickness; or he takes away their friends, or their comforts, and then they are left alone and in sorrow, like Samson in his prison-house. God sends all these sorrows. Why? Does God like to see his people unhappy, and in pain? No; "God is love;" and when he sends affliction, he sends it in love. He wishes his people to forget the world, and worldly things, and to love and trust in him

only ; and he gives them time and quiet, when they are sick and alone, to think about him, and to pray to him.

We may hope that Samson prayed, and thought much about God when he was in prison. Perhaps before, Samson had been very proud of his great strength ; now he had lost it, and God taught him that he had no power in himself: all the strength Samson had, God gave, and God could take away. When Samson first went to prison, his strength was all gone ; but after a time, his hair began to grow, and then his strength came again.

The Philistines worshipped an ugly idol like a fish, named Dagon. They made a great sacrifice to Dagon, and praised him, because they thought he had given Samson into their hands. They were very merry, playing, and laughing, and feasting, and praising their foolish idol ; and they said, " Let us call Samson, and we will play with him, and laugh at him, and make merry." Then Samson was led in ; he could not see his cruel enemies, and they all laughed at him, because he was blind, and weak, and in their power ; and they made him stand between two pillars.

It is very wicked to laugh at poor afflicted people. We ought to try to comfort them, and do them good. We should be kind even to our enemies; but the cruel Philistines had no pity for Samson.

The house where they were, was very large, and full of people; men, and women, and children; about 3000 were upon the roof, looking and wondering at Samson. Samson asked the boy who led him, to let him lean upon the pillars on which the house stood; and he took hold of one with his right hand, and of the other with his left hand. Then Samson prayed to God, and said, "Lord, give me now strength to conquer my enemies; let them die, and let me die with them." Then Samson bowed himself down with all his might, and pulled the pillars, and they fell, and the house, and the people who were upon the roof. All died, and Samson died too. He had killed many people who were his enemies, when he was alive and strong; and now, at his death, he killed many more.

God punished the wicked Philistines, because they were cruel to Samson, and enemies of Israel. God knows how to save his people.

He gave Samson strength to save Israel from the Philistines. If we have strength and health, we must try to use them rightly, and to do good to other people, and not be idle and selfish. It is God who gives us every thing, and we must thank him, and serve him with all we have.



CHAPTER XCIII.

NAOMI AND RUTH.

THERE lived in Bethlehem a man named Elimelech; he had a wife named Naomi, and two sons, named Mahlon and Chilion. Elimelech and his family lived many years very happily at Bethlehem; but after a time, God sent a famine upon the land, and all the people there were very much distressed. It is God who gives us corn for bread, and sends us the fruits of the earth at the right season; we ought to be very thankful for all these mercies. But sometimes, God is pleased not to send rain, or not to give us sunshine; and then the wheat and other vegetables do not grow up, nor ripen, and

we have no flour to make bread, and there is great suffering in some part of the world. But in all our wants we ought to trust in God; because he has power to give us what we need, and without him a sparrow cannot fall to the ground.

When the famine was very bad in Bethlehem, Elimelech and his family went to Moab to live there.

When they came to Moab, Mahlon and Chilion married wives of the women of Moab; they were idolaters, and their names were Orpah and Ruth. Mahlon and Chilion did not live long; they both died, and Elimelech died too; and Naomi was left with her two daughters-in-law. She had none to comfort her; all around were idolaters, and she wished to be in her own happy country again, where she might hear about God.

When the famine was over, Naomi said, she would return to her own land. Orpah and Ruth were both very kind and affectionate to Naomi, and went on the way with her towards the land of Judah; but Naomi did not wish to take her daughters to a new country, against their will; and she wished to try their love for her; so she

said, "No, my daughters do not go with me; go home to your country, and to your parents, and your friends, and may God deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead, and with me."

Then Naomi kissed them, and they both wept, and said, "We will surely go with thee." But Naomi said again, "Nay, my daughters, return to your homes; why will you go with me?" Then they wept again, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, and went away. Did not Ruth go? No; she threw her arms round Naomi, and would not leave her. But Naomi said, "See, Orpah is gone home to her friends, and to her gods; return thou after her." Then Ruth answered, "O do not tell me to go away; let me follow thee; where thou goest, I will go; thy people shall be my people; and thy God my God; where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried; only death shall part thee and me." Naomi was very happy to hear Ruth say this, for Naomi loved God, and she wished Ruth to love him too. So they walked on very happily together. Naomi talked to Ruth about holy things, and Ruth attended humbly to all she said.

Parents and friends who serve God themselves, are very glad when they see their dear children trying to serve him too. Young people should try to be like Ruth; gentle, and affectionate, and humble. Orpah was affectionate and kind; but she loved her idols and her country people best, and could not leave them. Ruth left all, because she loved best the worship of the true God. Do you wish to love God? Then you must leave the things of the world, and the people who do not love God; and give yourself up to his service, and try to be with those who love and serve him.

CHAPTER XCIV.

THE HARVEST FIELD.

NAOMI and Ruth went on together, and came to Bethlehem. Bethlehem had been Naomi's home, and many of her old friends still lived there. When they heard that Naomi was come, they all ran to see her. But when they looked at her, they said, "Is this Naomi?" Why did they ask? Because Naomi was so very much altered. When she lived before at Bethlehem, she was happy with her husband and her sons; but now, they were all gone, and she was left alone. She told her friends the sad story, that God had taken away her husband and her sons; and now she was a poor widow, and had come home to die in her own country.

It is God who takes away our friends from us, and we know that all God does is right. When he sends us sorrow, it is to make us love him more. It is very sad to lose our dear friends; but if they were God's people, then they are gone to Heaven to be happy for

ever; and we shall meet them there if we love God too.

When Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem, it was harvest time, and the people were all very busy reaping barley. A harvest field is a very pretty sight. It is pleasant to see the men reaping the beautiful yellow grain, and binding it in sheaves; and then the poor people are very glad to follow them, and gather what is left on the ground. When we look at the harvest fields, and the reapers, and the gleaners, and the yellow sheaves, we should feel very thankful to God who gives us all our good things.

When Ruth was living at home with Naomi, she did not wish to be idle. Idleness is a great sin. The Bible tells us not to be slothful; and all God's people must try to be industrious and useful. What work did Ruth do? She said, "Let me go and glean in the fields;" and Naomi answered, "Go, my daughter." All the people in Bethlehem were strangers to Ruth; she had no friends there; but when she went out to glean, God was with her, and he led her to the right field. God is always near his people; and, if they trust to him, he will teach them where to go, and

what to do. When we go out, we ought to ask God to go with us, and to keep and bless us wherever we are.

Ruth gleaned in a field which belonged to a man named Boaz. The reapers let her glean, and Ruth was very industrious, and did not stand idle. Boaz soon came to the field to see the reapers, and he said to them, "The Lord be with you." And they answered, "The Lord bless thee." Boaz was a servant of God; he loved and worshipped him himself, and he taught his people to serve him too. When Boaz saw his beautiful field, and his busy reapers, he remembered who gave him all his possessions; and he wished his servants to think about God when they were at work. It is very pleasant to see kind masters and good servants all serving God together, like Boaz and his reapers. Christian masters and servants will try to be like them.

Dayspring.



Boaz.—p. 327.

CHAPTER XCV.

BOAZ.

WHEN Boaz looked round the field, he saw Ruth very busy gleaning, and he asked who she was. His servant said, "It is the damsel who came with Naomi from Moab." Then Boaz went to her, and said, "Stay here with my maidens, and follow them, and glean after the reapers; and when thou art thirsty, go and drink what my servants have drawn." Ruth wondered at the kindness of Boaz, whom she had never seen before, and she fell down humbly before him, and asked, "Why dost thou show so much kindness to me a stranger?" Then Boaz said, "Because I have heard all thou hast done to thy mother-in-law: thou hast left thy home to go with her, and thou hast chosen the Lord to be thy God, under whose wings thou art come to trust. May he bless and reward thee." Then Ruth humbly thanked Boaz. She was not proud of her goodness. She knew she was a poor sinner, and deserved nothing; but she

felt thankful to God, who gave her kind friends in a strange country.

When it was meal time, Boaz told Ruth to sit by his servants, and eat; and when she had finished, she went again directly to her work. Ruth did not eat all the food given her, but put some away for her mother-in-law, and when it was evening, she took up her barley, and went home. She did not stay talking and idling, for she knew that her mother was alone, so she made haste to go to her. Then Naomi asked, "Where hast thou gleaned to-day?" And Ruth told her all about Boaz, and his kindness in letting her glean in his field. Naomi was much pleased to hear this; and she told Ruth, that Boaz was her relation, and that she felt sure he would be kind to them, and help them.

All the harvest time, Ruth went every day to glean in the fields of Boaz, and came home every evening, with corn and food for Naomi. Were they happy? Yes, because they lived together in the love of God. They were poor, but they knew God could keep them, and they trusted in him. Riches cannot make us happy, but God's blessing can make us happy without them.

At last, harvest time was over, and what could Ruth do then? There was no more corn to glean, but God did not forget her. She had given herself up to him, and he promises always to take care of his people. Naomi's relation, Boaz, was very fond of Ruth. He loved her, because she loved God, and because she was industrious, and dutiful and attentive to Naomi. It was God who made Boaz so kind and affectionate to Ruth. Elimelech had had a possession in Canaan, and Boaz said, he would buy that possession, and marry Ruth, according to a custom among the Israelites. So Boaz and Ruth married, and were very happy together, because they both served God, and his blessing was upon them. They had a little son named Obed. Naomi loved this child very much; and she took him in her arms, and nursed him, and, praised God who had made them all so happy, and given them so many blessings. How glad Ruth was that she had left her own idolatrous country, and come with Naomi, and chosen God for her father and friend! God never forgets those who truly wish to serve him.

Obed lived to grow up a man. He was the father of Jesse, and the grandfather of David

king of Israel; and many kings descended from him. Thus God honoured his faithful servants.

CHAPTER XCVI.

HANNAH'S PRAYER.

THERE was a man named Elkanah, who lived at Mount Ephraim. He worshipped the true God, and every year went with his family to sacrifice to the Lord at Shiloh. Elkanah had a wife named Hannah, and she loved God too. Was Hannah happy? One thing made her sorry; she had no child, and she wished very much to have a son.

One year, when Elkanah and his family went to Shiloh, Hannah felt very sad, and she determined to tell her sorrow to God. So when the sacrifice was ended at Shiloh, Hannah went and prayed to the Lord. She cried very much when she prayed, and vowed a vow, and said, "If thou, Lord, wilt give me a son, I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life." Hannah was not alone when she prayed; the old

priest was sitting by; his name was Eli. Eli looked at Hannah while she was praying, and he saw her lips moving, but he could not hear what she said, and he spoke unkindly to her, and asked her what she was doing. Hannah told the priest, that she was unhappy, and that she was telling God all her sorrows, and asking him to comfort her. Eli was a good old man, and he was very glad to find that Hannah prayed with her heart, and not with her lips alone; and he blessed her, and asked God to hear her prayer. Then Hannah thanked Eli, and wiped away her tears, and went home with her husband.

Hannah was now "no more sad." She had told God her sorrow, and asked him to give her a child; and she waited for him to do as he pleased. She knew that what God does is right and best; and she trusted all to him, and was happy.

When we are sorry, we ought to do as Hannah did; we ought to go and pray to God. Many things often make us sad; perhaps we are sick, or we lose our friends, or people are unkind to us, or we are unhappy because we feel we are very sinful, and are afraid of God's

anger. God knows all our sorrows, and he likes us to tell them to him. But when we pray, we must pray in truth, with our hearts, and in faith, as Hannah prayed, and then, God will attend to our prayers. If right, he will give us what we ask; but perhaps God will not give us every thing we want, because he may think it best not. So we must leave all to God, for he is good and wise, and knows what is right for us; but we are ignorant and foolish, and very often ask amiss. But one thing we may be sure he will give us when we pray. What is it? His Holy Spirit: Jesus says "Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

CHAPTER XCVII.

LITTLE SAMUEL.

DID God hear Hannah's prayer? Yes; and soon after, he gave her a little son. She named him Samuel. And now Hannah remembered her vow to give her child to God. When he was old enough to go away from her, she carried him to Shiloh, to the Lord's house there. Then Hannah went to Eli, and gave the little boy to him, and said, "I am the woman who prayed here some time ago. I asked God then to give me a son, and he has heard my prayer. Here is my child; I have lent him to the Lord: as long as he lives he shall be lent unto the Lord." It was a happy day at Shiloh, when little Samuel was brought there. Elkanah rejoiced, and Hannah, and old Eli too, and they all worshipped God; and Hannah sang a beautiful song of praise.

Why were they so glad? Because God had heard Hannah's prayer, and because little Samuel was given up to God. Those are happy children who have kind and good parents to bring them

up in the love of God. All parents who love God desire nothing so much for their children as that they may be his.

Hannah left her dear little boy at Shiloh, and went home to Ramah with her husband. Was she sorry to leave Samuel? No, because she knew that God would bless her child, and that Eli would teach him what was right. Little Samuel was very obedient, and gentle, and kind, and affectionate to old Eli. Every year his mother came to Shiloh to sacrifice, and then she saw her little boy: and Hannah used to ask Eli if Samuel was good and attentive, and if he began to love and serve God. She made him a little coat, and brought it to him when she came to Shiloh. Old Eli and Hannah taught Samuel what was right, and they prayed God to bless him, and God heard their prayer. God gave Hannah other children, all of whom she doubtless trained in the fear of God.

Little Samuel grew older, and God loved him, and all his friends loved him too. Eli had two sons; they were not little boys, like Samuel, but grown up; and they were priests in the house of the Lord at Shiloh. God's priests ought to be very good and holy men; but

Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's sons, were very wicked men; they did not love nor obey God. Their father Eli knew that they were wicked, and he called them, and said, "My sons, I hear no good report of you. You sin against the Lord, and teach his people to do wrong. Why will you do such things?" But Hophni and Phinehas would not attend to their father; but became more and more wicked. It is very sad for good parents to have rebellious children; poor old Eli was very unhappy when he saw his sons so self-willed and disobedient. But was he right to let his wicked sons stay and be priests at Shiloh? No, Eli did very wrong: he ought to have punished them, and sent them away, and not let them be priests; but Eli foolishly indulged his children, and did not like to punish them.

Then God was very angry, and said, he would punish Eli, and slay Hophni and Phinehas in one day. How fearful it is to make God angry! He is a holy God, and must punish sin. Eli was a good man, but God punished him because he let his sons go on in wickedness, and honoured them more than he honoured God.

CHAPTER XCVIII.

SAMUEL CALLED.

SAMUEL was still living with Eli ; and he was kind and obedient, when Eli's own sons were rebellious and self-willed. Samuel did not know much about God, but he wished to know more, and he was glad and attentive when Eli told him about holy things. And little Samuel used to ask God to teach him, because only God can make us understand aright the good things we are taught. God heard Samuel's prayer, and he will hear now the prayers of all children who pray as Samuel did.

One night, when Samuel was in bed, he heard a voice calling, "Samuel, Samuel." It was God who called ; but Samuel did not know this, because God had never called him before. So Samuel arose directly, and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for thou calledst me." But Eli answered, "No, my son, I called not ; lie down again." Then Samuel went again, and lay down ; but soon the voice called the second time, "Samuel." Samuel still thought it was

Eli's voice, and he went again to the old priest, and said, "Here I am." But Eli said, "My son, I did not call; go and lie down again." Samuel obeyed; he wondered who had called him; but he did not ask questions; he did what Eli told him, and lay down quietly in his little bed. Did God call again? Yes; the third time, he said, "Samuel, Samuel." Was not Samuel tired of running to Eli? No, he went again to him directly; he was not impatient because he was called so often. Children should try to be like little Samuel, as humble, and obedient, and patient as he was.

When Eli saw Samuel running to him again, he began to think it was God who had called the child. So he said, "Go, and lie down; and, if he call again, thou shalt say, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." So Samuel went back, and lay down; wondering why the holy God should speak to him, a poor sinful boy. Perhaps he felt a little frightened; but Samuel had no need to fear; for God loved him very much, and would not hurt his own dear child. Did the voice call again? Yes, the Lord called the fourth time, "Samuel, Samuel." Then the little boy arose, and looked up humbly to

Heaven, and said, "Speak, for thy servant heareth."

How happy Samuel was, to have God so near him, and so kind to him! It is very pleasant when children early learn to serve and love God, like little Samuel. God calls children now. How? Does he speak to them with a loud voice, and call them by their names? No; they cannot hear his *voice*; but he speaks to them in his *word*, in the Bible. What does he say? He says, "My son, give me thine heart." "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." "Seek ye my face." Do you wish to have God for your friend and Saviour? Then you must, like Samuel, attend to him, and obey him, and say "Thy face, Lord, will I seek."

CHAPTER XCIX.

ELI'S SONS.

WHAT did God say, when he called Samuel the fourth time? God had something very sad to tell Samuel. He said he was going soon to do a fearful thing in Israel:—to punish Eli and his family, because his sons were wicked, and he restrained them not.

When it was light, Samuel arose. He was not an idle boy; he had work to do, and he always did it in good time: it was his business, in the morning, to open the doors of the Lord's house. Was Samuel very proud to tell Eli what God had said? No, he was a humble child; and he did not boast of his honour. He was very sorry to make Eli unhappy; and he did not tell him what God had said for a long time. But the old priest saw Samuel looking very sad; and he called him, and said, "My son, what did God tell thee last night? Do not fear to speak; I wish to know the truth; tell me all." Then Samuel told Eli all that God had said. Samuel was very sorry to make his dear, kind, old friend

unhappy; but he knew that it was right to tell the truth. He spoke very humbly, and kindly, and respectfully, because he remembered that Eli was an old man, and it is right for children to be kind and respectful to old people.

Poor Eli! He felt very, very sad, when Samuel had finished: but Eli knew that God had spoken, and he felt that all was right. Everything God does must be right, because he is so wise, and good, and holy. Then Eli said, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." Eli did well to submit: if God punishes us, we ought to be humble and patient: but when Eli thought about his sin, he felt very unhappy. What was his sin? His sons were wicked, and he did not restrain them. The Bible tells parents to teach children what is right, and to punish them when they do wrong; and parents make God very angry if they do not attend to this. Parents should always reprove their children when they are self-willed and rebellious; and the children ought to be thankful to their parents, and teachers, and friends, who try to bring them up aright.

CHAPTER C.

ELI'S DEATH.

SAMUEL grew taller and older, and every day he learnt more and more about God. He was God's child, and God kept him, and made him wise in holy things. It is very pleasant when children grow older, if they grow better too: but some grow worse, and not better. Eli's sons grew worse, more and more wicked every day. God did not bless Israel now; they were wicked, and the priests were wicked, and God was going to punish them all.

The Philistines came to fight against Israel, and there was a great battle. Who conquered? Not the Israelites, because God did not fight for them, and without him they had no power to conquer their enemies. The Philistines gained the victory, and 4000 of the Israelites were killed. Then the people of Israel said, "Why does God let the Philistines conquer us? We will bring the ark from Shiloh, and take it to the camp; perhaps the ark will save us from our enemies." So they sent to Shiloh, and took

away the ark, and brought it to the camp; and Hophni and Phinehas came with it. The army of the Israelites shouted very loud when they saw the ark, for they thought they were now sure of the victory; but God could not bless wicked priests and disobedient people; he turned away, and would not help them.

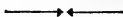
When the Philistines saw the ark, they were frightened; for they thought it was the Israelites' god, an idol-god, like Dagon, or Baal, and they told their soldiers to be very brave, and to fight against them with all their strength. Then the battle began; and the Israelites were beaten, and ran to their tents: and 30,000 were killed. Where were Hophni and Phinehas? Their dead bodies were found on the field; their souls were gone to appear before God, and to be judged for all their sins! And the holy ark was gone from Israel too; the Philistines took it away, and carried it to their own country; God showed his sinful people that he was not with them now.

It was a sad, sad day. Poor old Eli did not see the battle; he was too old to go so far; but he felt very unhappy, because he knew how angry God was, and he thought much

about his poor wicked sons. He went to the gate of the city, and sat down there. All the people of Shiloh were unhappy too, and they waited trembling till the news came about the battle. At last, a man came running very fast from the army; and when the people looked at him, they saw that his clothes were rent, and dust was upon his head, and they knew that he brought very sad news. When the man told them that the battle was lost, all the people cried out; the cry was very loud, and very bitter, and poor old Eli heard it. He could not see, for his eyes were dim with old age, he was ninety-eight years old, but he heard the noise, and he called the messenger, and asked, "What is the noise I hear? Why do the people cry?" The messenger said, "I have just run from the army." Then Eli trembled very much, and asked, "What is done there? tell me." The man said, "The Israelites are conquered, Hophni and Phinehas are slain, and the ark of God is taken away." Eli heard it all; but when the messenger said that the ark was gone, he could bear no more; he did not look up, nor speak again; he fell back off his seat, and his neck broke, and he died. Poor Eli! He could not

bear so much sorrow. He had lost all his comforts; God's anger was upon the country; and the ark and the blessing of God were taken away.

Eli did not meet his sons in Heaven. They died in their sins; they had not repented; and they were not ready for Heaven. How sad, when parents go to Heaven, not to find their children there too! to think that many Christian parents will not meet their children in Heaven.



CHAPTER CI.

DAGON AND THE ARK.

THE Philistines took away the ark from Ebenezer, where the battle was fought, and carried it to Ashdod, and put it in the temple of their idol Dagon. The Philistines thought that the ark was an idol like Dagon; but God soon showed them that it was very different.

When the Philistines came into the temple on the morrow morning, they saw Dagon fallen down before the ark; and they took him, and put him up again. But the next day, they found Dagon fallen down again, and his hands

and his head broken to pieces. Who had done this? God did it, to show the Philistines how powerful he was, and that their idol god could not stand before his holy ark. God punished the people too of Ashdod with a dreadful plague; and they were very much frightened, and said, the ark should not stay with them any longer, because it hurt them and their god Dagon.

How sad that the Philistines liked their own foolish idol better than the true God, the God of Israel! The ark was a type of Christ. We can be blessed and happy only when Christ is with us, in our hearts. But many people now are like the wicked and ignorant Philistines. They like their idols better than God. What idols? Not Dagon, nor Baal. People in this country do not worship them; but many love the idols of the world; money, and pleasure, and foolish things, and self. Many people say in their hearts, "We do not want God: we do not like to pray, and to think of him, and to serve him; we like our pleasures best, we like the world best." These people are like the Philistines, who sent away the holy ark, be-

cause they liked to serve Dagon better than the true God.

Where did the ark go? The Philistines sent it to Gath; but there God punished the people with the plague, and then they sent the ark to Ekron. When the people of Ekron saw it coming, they were very much frightened, and cried, "Take the ark away; we fear a plague will come with it; send it back to its own country." The ark was seven months in the Philistines' country, and many people died of the plague which God sent.

At last, the Philistines said, they would send the ark home: for they saw that the God of Israel was stronger than they, and they could not resist his power. So they made a new cart, and put the ark into it; two cows drew the cart; their calves were not with them; the Philistines shut them up at home. Were the cows willing to go away, and leave their young? Yes, when they were tied to the cart, they took the right road to go to the land of Israel: they did not stand still; they went straight on, without turning to right or left. Who drove them? They went of themselves; the lords

of the Philistines followed wondering : but none led the kine along the road.

It was God who taught these poor, ignorant animals where to go ; his power made them leave their masters, and forget their young. God can make all things do as he pleases. He had before made Balaam's ass speak, and now he could make these animals carry the holy ark to the place he chose. He showed the Philistines what a wonderful God he was, and made them give glory to him.



CHAPTER CII.

THE ARK.

THE cows drew the ark in the cart to Bethshemesh. The people there were very busy reaping ; for it was harvest time. They heard something coming, and looked up, to see what it was. What did they see ? The cart without a driver, coming to them along the road ; and when they looked into the cart, there they saw the holy ark of God, which they had lost so

long. Then the people in Bethshemesh rejoiced very much. The cart came close to them, and the cows stood still; and the Levites took out the ark, and put it upon a large stone. Then they cut up the cart for wood, and offered the cows in joyful sacrifice to God who had sent them his holy ark again. The lords of the Philistines, who followed the cart, saw all this, and wondered, and returned to their own country.

But a sad thing happened at Bethshemesh that day. The people were very much pleased to have the ark again; but some of them forgot what a holy thing it was, and they went to it, and looked into it, very irreverently, without remembering that God had commanded them to honour it, and only allowed the Levites to touch it. The men of Bethshemesh made God very angry; and he smote them; and 50,070 people died.

How sad it is to dishonour things which belong to God! God's day, and God's house, and God's book, are all holy things, and we make God angry if we dishonour them. We ought to be very solemn when we go to holy places, and when we read God's Bible,

and at holy times when we pray, or praise him.

The people of Bethshemesh were very much frightened when they saw so many of their friends dead, and said, "Who can stand before this holy Lord God?" Then they sent to Kirjath-jearim, and asked the people there to come and take the ark away. The men of Kirjath-jearim were very glad to have it; and they brought it to the house of a man named Abinadab, and he consecrated his son to keep it; and it stayed there many years.

The Israelites now began to be sorry for their sins, and they cried to the Lord. God had punished them very much, and taken away the ark from them; but now they wanted to have God's blessing again, because they felt they could not be happy without it.

None can be happy without God's love and blessing. We have not the ark now to be with us, as it used to be with Israel, and we do not want it. We have Jesus Christ, of whom the ark was the type, and he is always with us, to bless us, if we are his people.

When the Israelites began to cry about their sins, they had a kind friend to teach them

what to do. Who was that friend? Samuel; he was now a man, and God's love and blessing were still upon him. God taught him to speak to his people Israel. Samuel said, "Do you wish to serve God in truth, and to have his blessing again? If you do, you must put away your idols, and turn to God, and serve him alone." Then the Israelites attended to Samuel, and put away their idols, and began to serve the Lord. Samuel called them to Mizpeh, and there he prayed for them: and they prayed too, and asked for forgiveness, and cried, "We have sinned against the Lord."

We are sinners, like the Israelites; and if we want God's forgiveness and God's blessing, we must do as they did. We must pray for pardon, and ask God to help us to serve him; because, without God's help, we cannot serve him aright. We have no power in ourselves; but God promises to give his Holy Spirit to those who ask: he says, "Ask, and it shall be given you."

CHAPTER CIII

EBEN-EZER.

WHEN the Philistines heard that the Israelites were gathered together at Mizpeh, they went there to fight against them. The Israelites were very much frightened when they heard that their enemies were coming, and they went for help to their kind friend Samuel. But the Israelites knew that Samuel himself had not power to save them: God alone could deliver them; so they said to Samuel, "Pray for us to God; ask him to save us from the Philistines." Then Samuel took a lamb, and offered it up in faith, as a sacrifice to God, and prayed unto the Lord; and the Lord heard him. But did the Philistines come to Mizpeh? Yes; while Samuel was offering the sacrifice, he looked up, and saw the enemies coming nearer and nearer, and making ready for battle. Was he frightened? No, because he trusted in God; he knew God had power to deliver his people; and when he remembered that, Samuel could not fear. The Israelites did not fight the Philistines, but God himself fought, and conquered them. How? Not

with swords, nor spears, nor arrows: he sent a great thunder storm, and frightened the Philistines, and they fled; and the Israelites followed, and killed them in great numbers.

When the Philistines were conquered, Samuel took a great stone, and set it up near Mizpeh. Why? Because he wished all Israel to remember God's kindness to them in saving them from their enemies. When, in future years, the Israelites should look upon that stone, they would think, "Here God was merciful to us, and delivered us from our cruel enemies the Philistines." Samuel gave the stone a name; he called it Eben-ezer, in the Hebrew language: in English it means "the stone of help." Why did Samuel call the stone, a stone of help? "Because," he said, "hitherto hath the Lord helped us." The Philistines were all gone; they did not again come to trouble and frighten the Israelites; and Samuel and the people were right to thank and praise God for all his mercies.

God is very kind to his people now. We have, like Israel, many sorrows, and troubles, and dangers, and enemies. We are often sick, and sorry, and frightened, and unhappy. Very often we have been in danger. When we were

little children, many times we were very near death ; we might have been drowned, or burnt, or thrown down and killed. But God has kept us safely all our lives till to-day. Then ought we not to thank and praise our kind God, as Israel did when they looked at their Eben-ezer ? Let us remember that God is our help. He has taken care of us in past years ; and we must ask him to take care of us in all our future years too, and to bring us safely at last to Heaven.



CHAPTER CIV.

THE NEW KING.

MANY long years Samuel judged the people of Israel : and when they hearkened to him, and obeyed him, they were safe and happy ; because he ruled over them rightly, and taught them to fear and love the Lord. But at last, Samuel grew an old man, and then his sons helped him to judge Israel. Samuel's sons were not like their good father. They loved money, and the things of the world, better than they loved God.

How sad it is when children will not attend to their parents and teachers, who try to bring them up in the fear of God! Samuel's sons were like Eli's sons; they would not attend to their good father.

The Israelites said to Samuel, "Thou art old, and thy sons, who judge us now, are not like thee: give us a king to reign over us." Samuel was displeased when the Israelites said this; but he made no answer; he went first to ask God what was right. God was very angry with the people of Israel. He was their king; he gave them laws, and fought their battles, and took care of them and of their country; he was their best friend and ruler; and they were ungrateful and rebellious, and foolish too, to wish for a new king.

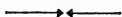
Samuel went again to the people, and told them what God had spoken. Samuel told them they had made God very angry; for he was their king, and they ought not to desire another; and a new king would not make them happy; he might be ambitious, and selfish, and cruel, and then they would cry for deliverance, when it would be too late. But the people did not care for what Samuel said, and for the kind

warning he gave them; they cried out again, "We will have a king. We want to be like other nations; we want to fight battles, and to have a king to go with us." Then Samuel went again to God, and told him what the people said. And did God let them have their wish? Yes, he told Samuel to let the people have a king. But God was not pleased. He let his people have their own way; but he was punishing them, not blessing them.

Self-will makes God very angry. We are weak and foolish, and we know not what is right or best for us. But God knows, and we ought to submit in all things to his will. When he takes away, or does not give us what we ask him for, we may be sure that it is best for us not to have it; and we ought to be patient, and submit quietly. But if we are angry and discontented, we are like the self-willed Israelites, and make God very angry. What we want cannot make us happy without God's blessing: and we cannot have God's blessing when we are impatient and rebellious. We must ask God to help us to submit to him, and to do for us as he pleases.

The self-willed Israelites did not wish God to

do as he pleased: they wished to have their own way, and God gave them their wish. But they soon found that God was right and wise, and that they were wrong and foolish, and unable to choose what was best for themselves.



CHAPTER CV.

SAUL.

THERE was a man of the tribe of Benjamin, named Kish, and he had a son called Saul. Saul was in appearance a very fine young man, and very tall; he was taller than any of the people. One day, some of the asses of Kish went astray, and were lost. Kish was sorry to lose them, and he called his son Saul, and said, "Take a servant with thee, and go, seek the asses." Then Saul and his servant got ready, and went. They went a long way, but they could not see the asses; and Saul grew tired, and said to the servant, "Come, let us go home, for we cannot find the asses, and my father will begin to be frightened about us." The servant

answered, "There is a good man living near who is a prophet, and a very wise man; shall we go to him first, and ask him our best way, and where we may find the asses?" Saul said, "Yes, let us go;" so they both went to the city where the prophet lived. This prophet was Samuel; he lived at Ramah in Benjamin, where Saul and his servant were travelling.

When they came near the city, they met some young women going to draw water, and they asked, "Is the prophet here?" The young women said, "Yes, he came to-day to a sacrifice in the city; he blesses the sacrifice before the people eat, and he is now going to the high place; make haste, and you will find him." Saul and the servant went on, and soon came to the gate of the city, and there they saw an old man, and they went to him, and Saul asked, "Where is the prophet's house?" The old man said, "I am the prophet; my name is Samuel; come with me, and eat with me to-day, and to-morrow thou shalt go. Do not grieve about the asses, for they are found. I have much to tell thee; the desire of all Israel is on thee, and on thy father's house." Then Saul wondered very much, and said, "Why dost

thou speak so to me? My family is the least in the tribe of Benjamin.”

Why did Samuel honour Saul so much? Because God had said to Samuel, “That is the man who shall reign over my people.” Samuel honoured Saul as his king; for though the Israelites did wrong in asking for a king, yet they were to love and respect him when God gave them their wish.

Samuel brought Saul and his servant into his house, and made them sit down to a great feast in his parlour: and Samuel told the cook to bring the best of the meat, and put it before Saul. Then Samuel said, “This is for thee; I kept it for thee, unto this time.” When the feast was ended, Samuel talked to Saul upon the top of the house. He said that the people wanted a king, and that God had chosen Saul to be the king.

Was Saul pleased? Perhaps he was. Many people wish to be great, and to have riches, and honours, and possessions. But these things cannot make us happy, and we ought not to wish to be greater and richer than we are. God calls some people to be kings like Saul; other people he tells to obey, and to serve. He knows

what is best for us, and whether we are rich or poor, we shall be happy with his blessing ; but all the riches and honours of the world could not make us happy without it.



CHAPTER CVI.

SAUL MADE KING.

THE next morning, very early, Saul and his servant arose to go home, and Samuel went with them to the end of the city. Then Samuel told the servant to go on before, because he had a secret thing to say to Saul. When the servant was gone, and Samuel and Saul were alone, Samuel took a bottle of oil, and poured the oil upon Saul's head. Then he kissed Saul, and said, "God has chosen thee to be king, to rule over his people Israel;" and Samuel told Saul that he would soon meet a company of prophets, and that God would give him power to prophesy too. Then Samuel and Saul parted; Samuel went home, and Saul went on his way.

And now God gave great power and wisdom to Saul; he felt like a new man. Very soon he met the prophets, as Samuel had said, and Saul went among them, and began to prophesy too. Who taught Saul to prophesy? God; he gave him wisdom and knowledge, to help and strengthen him in the new work given him. All the people wondered very much to hear Saul prophesy, and they said, "What is this? is Saul also among the prophets?"

Saul met his uncle soon after, and the uncle asked him and his servant "Where have you been?" Saul said, "We went to seek my father's asses, which were lost. And when we could not find them, we went to the prophet Samuel, and he told us that they were found." Saul did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about the kingdom; he was right not to boast of his new honours.

Samuel now called all the people together to Mizpeh. He said to them, "You wish very much to have a king; God is not pleased with your wish; because he was your king, your best friend, and you are ungrateful and rebellious to ask for another. But God will let you have

your wish ; call now all your tribes before the Lord, and he will choose a king for you."

Then Samuel called the tribes one after another, and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen ; then he called all the families of Benjamin, and the family of Kish was chosen ; and Saul was chosen out of that family, to be king of Israel. Then the people said, " Where is Saul ? He is our king, bring him here." So they sought him, but could not find him for a long time. Then the people asked God again, to tell them if Saul was the right man, and God said " Yes," and he told them that Saul had hid himself ; so they looked in the place which God pointed out, and there they found Saul ; and they brought him to the people. He was taller than any of them, and they all admired him very much. Then Samuel said, " Do you see the king, God has chosen ?" All the people shouted for joy, and said, " God save the king."

Then Samuel taught the people their duty to their new king, and wrote it for them in a book, to help them to remember it. God did not wish the people to have a king, but now that he had given them one, he commanded them to respect, and obey, and love him. The

Bible tells us all to be obedient to our rulers, because it is God who appoints governments; and therefore when we disobey, we disobey God. Let us pray God to bless our rulers, and to give them wisdom and knowledge to rule this great nation rightly.



CHAPTER CVII.

SAMUEL'S WARNING.

AFTER Saul was made king, Samuel again called the people together. He was now a very old man, and soon he must die, and leave them; but they had a young king to rule over them when he was gone, and Samuel wanted to talk to them, and to warn them, and to teach them what they must do to be happy with their new king.

Samuel said, "I am now an old man; my hair is white with age; I have been with you all my life, from the time when I was a child till now. Tell me if I have oppressed you, or if I have taken any thing away from you, and I

will restore it." Then the people cried "No;" for they all loved Samuel very much, and knew that he had always been their kind friend.

Then Samuel said again, "Wait, and hear what I wish to say to you. Many, many years ago, God brought your fathers out of Egypt, and Moses and Aaron with them, and gave them this land for a possession. Very often your fathers rebelled against God, and then he punished them, and sent enemies to fight and conquer them. He sent Sisera, and the Philistines, and the Moabites, and many more enemies, to fight against them. But when your fathers repented, and turned to God, and gave up their idols, then the Lord had mercy, and saved them. He sent many good and faithful captains, to conquer their enemies. Gideon, and Jephthah, and Samson, and many more. Now you have asked for a king, because you were tired of God ruling over you; and he has given you Saul, and you are pleased and happy. If you and your king obey and serve the Lord, then God's blessing will be upon you, and you will have the Lord for your friend. But if you are disobedient, and rebel, then God will be your enemy, and punish you as he punished your

fathers. And now, God is going to do a great thing, that you may know how much you have sinned against him in asking for a king."

What was this great thing? It was harvest time, when it very seldom rains, or thunders, or lightens, in Judea; but Samuel asked God to send a storm, to show his great power to the people, and to teach them how angry he was.

God heard Samuel's prayer, and sent a fearful storm of thunder, and lightning, and rain; and all the people were very much afraid. Then they cried aloud, and asked Samuel to pray to God for them, and confessed their sins, and asked forgiveness for having wished for a new king, when God himself was their king.

Samuel was sorry to see the people unhappy, and he comforted them, and spoke kindly to them. He said, "Yes, I will pray for you, and I will teach you to do what is right. But remember always to fear the Lord, and to love and obey him. Think how kind he has been to you in past times, and how merciful he is to you now. If you cleave to him with all your heart, he will never, never forsake you; but, if you do wickedly, he will destroy both you

and your king.” Then Samuel ended what he had to say, and the people went home.

Samuel was very kind to teach them what was right. People can be happy only when they love and fear God. If we give ourselves to God, he will be our friend, as he was the Israelites' friend. We have sinned and rebelled against God many times, as they had; but when we repent, and pray him to wash away our sins in the blood of Jesus Christ, and to make our hearts new by the Holy Spirit, he is always willing and glad to forgive us. And then we shall be very happy: we shall have God for our protector all the years we live; and when we die, he will take us to Heaven, to live with him for ever.

CHAPTER CVIII.

SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE.

SAUL began his reign well, but very soon he became tired of doing right. His heart had not been made new by the Holy Spirit; so he did not wish to please God, nor care for holy things, nor pray for help to rule his people rightly.

One year passed away. The Philistines were very busy making ready to fight against Israel again; but Saul did not try to prevent them. At last, the Philistines came together in great numbers, and then Saul and the Israelites began to be very much frightened. Saul went to Gilgal, and he told all the people to follow him there, and they came trembling for fear.

Was Samuel with them? No, he did not go to Gilgal directly; but he told Saul to wait there seven days, and then he promised to come and offer the sacrifice, and pray for God's blessing. Saul and the people waited till the seventh day; then they looked for Samuel, but they did not see him coming. At last, Saul became very impatient, and he would not wait

any longer. He commanded the people to bring the offering, and he sacrificed it himself, without waiting for Samuel.

Was this right? No; Saul was not a priest, nor a prophet; he had no right to offer sacrifices, and he disobeyed the command of God and of Samuel in doing this. Samuel had not forgotten his promise; Saul had just finished offering the sacrifice, when he looked up, and saw Samuel coming. Then Saul ran to meet Samuel; for he was not sorry, nor ashamed of the foolish and wicked thing he had done. But Samuel said to the king, "What hast thou done?" Saul answered, "I saw the Philistines coming, and thou wast not here, and therefore I offered the sacrifice myself." But Samuel said, "Thou hast done foolishly and wickedly. Thou hast disobeyed the command of God, and made him very angry. He will soon take away the kingdom from thee, and give it to a better man. God is not thy friend now, because thou hast disobeyed and rebelled against him." Then Samuel arose, and went away. He could not stay with wicked, disobedient Saul, because he knew that Saul had no love to God, and no wish to please him. Saul did not care for God's blessing; pride, and

impatience, and rebellion made him offer the sacrifice; not faith, and love, and obedience to God.

When Samuel was gone, Saul counted his soldiers, and made them ready for the battle. But God was not with Saul, to help him now. How sad to make God angry, and not to have him for our friend in our dangers and troubles, and sorrows!

Saul had a son very unlike himself; a son who loved and feared God. His name was Jonathan. When Jonathan saw the Philistines all waiting in their tents in great numbers, he called the man who carried his armour, and said, "Let us go up to the Philistines, and fight them. They are more and stronger than we; but, if we trust in God, he can help us to conquer them: he can save by many or by few." Jonathan's armour bearer was willing to go; they both went boldly, and showed themselves to the Philistines. When their enemies saw them, they called to them to come up, for the Philistines did not fear Jonathan and his man; they only laughed at them. The way up to the Philistines' camp was very steep, through sharp rocks. But Jonathan was not afraid. He called to his armour bearer, and

said, "Come up after me; for the Lord hath delivered them into our hands." Then they both began to climb up the rock on their hands and knees, because the way was so rough and steep. But God helped them, as Jonathan had said: and brought them in safety to the top of the rock.

When Jonathan and his armour bearer were at the top of the rock, they began to fight with their enemies, and God gave them power to conquer, and they killed twenty men of the Philistines. God made all the Philistines tremble with fear, and the ground shook too; but he gave strength to Israel, and they gained the victory that day. Saul did not see Jonathan and his armour bearer when they went to the Philistines' camp on the rock; and he wondered very much when he heard the noise. He looked round, and counted his men, to see who had gone away; and soon he found that Jonathan and his armour bearer were not there. Then Saul and all his soldiers went to the battle, and fought and conquered the Philistines. It was God who saved the Israelites, not their own power. God made the Philistines fall one

upon another, for fear made them like wild mad men.

The Israelites were very weak and tired that day, for Saul had commanded them not to eat any food till all their enemies were conquered. But Jonathan did not hear his father's command. At last the Israelites came to a wood; the ground there was covered with honey, made by the bees that had their nests among the trees; the people looked at the honey, and wanted to eat it; but they were afraid of disobeying the king. They were very hungry, but they would not taste the honey. But as Jonathan had not heard the command, he took some honey, and ate, and soon he felt better and stronger. Then the people told Jonathan what Saul had said.

When the battle was ended, and the people might eat, they all ran greedily, and killed oxen, and sheep, and lambs, and began to eat without waiting till the meat was prepared. Then Saul was very angry with them, and said, "Why do you sin against God, and eat the blood of the animals?" But Saul forgot that it was his own foolish and cruel command which made the people do so. Then Saul built an altar to the Lord, in remembrance of the

victory. It was right to thank God, and pray to him; but Saul's heart was not right. God knew that Saul did not really love him, but only pretended to honour him. God would not be pleased with Saul's altars, and sacrifices, and prayers, if wickedness was in Saul's heart. God knows all our thoughts; he knows when we are sincere, and when we are not sincere; and he will not bless hypocrites.

Saul said, "Let us go now again in the night, and kill more of the Philistines. We will not let one escape." But the priest said, "Let us ask God's blessing before we go." Saul then asked God, "Shall I go to fight the Philistines? Wilt thou help me to conquer them?" But God gave no answer. Then Saul called all the people, and said, "Come now, and we will ask God to tell us who has sinned, and why he will not answer our prayers." So they cast lots, and God made the lot fall on Jonathan. Saul did not know that Jonathan had eaten the honey, for the people had not told him. Then Saul called Jonathan, and said, "Tell me what thou hast done?" Jonathan knew that his father was very angry; but he did not try to deny; he was not afraid to confess the truth. He said

directly, "I tasted a little honey in the wood ; I did not hear thy command ; and must I die ?" Then Saul was very angry, and said, "Thou shalt surely die, Jonathan." But the people hid Jonathan, and would not let Saul hurt him. Then the Philistines went back to their own country, and Saul fought against his other enemies, the Moabites, and Amalekites, and Ammonites, and conquered them. But after all his victories, Saul could not be happy. God was not with him ; and riches, and possessions, and victories, cannot make us happy without God's love and blessing.



CHAPTER CIX.

THE AMALEKITES.

GOD now sent a new command to Saul. There were some wicked people living near, the Amalekites ; and God told Samuel to command Saul to go and destroy them. Men, and women, and children, and oxen, and sheep, all must die. This was a sad command, but it must be obeyed.

God had waited many long years, to see if the Amalekites would repent, and turn to him. But these wicked people loved their sins and their idols, and they would not give them up. And now God would wait no longer, and he said, that all the Amalekites should be destroyed. God in mercy gives sinners time to repent; but if they will not attend, nor pray for forgiveness, they will be destroyed, and perish for ever.

Saul called his soldiers, and they went to fight against Amalek. God helped Israel to conquer their enemies; all the people of Amalek were killed, and the king was taken prisoner. Did Saul do as God told him? No; for he did not kill Agag the king, and he chose the best of the sheep and oxen, and put them away, and did not kill them; but all that was bad, he destroyed. Was this right? No, it was disobedience to God's command. Saul thought his own way better than God's way; he was self-willed and rebellious. God was much displeased with Saul, and he sent Samuel to him with a very fearful message. In the morning, Samuel rose early, and went to Saul, to Gilgal. Saul was not sorry, nor ashamed of what he had done; he boldly dared to say, "I have performed God's

command.” But Samuel said, “What is this noise of sheep and oxen which I hear?” Then Saul answered, “The people saved them to sacrifice to God; all the rest we have killed.” Samuel said, “Hear now what God has told me. He commanded thee to go and kill all the Amalekites; he told thee to destroy every thing; why didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord?” Then Saul told a lie again, and said, “I have obeyed God; I have taken Agag prisoner; he is here; and the people took the animals for sacrifice.” Samuel answered, “God does not want sacrifices without obedience. God likes humility, and love, and gentleness; obedience pleases him more than any sacrifice. Rebellion makes him very angry, and thou hast rebelled; and therefore God has now turned away from thee, and will not let thee be king over his people Israel.” Then Saul began to be frightened, and he said, “Yes, I have sinned; but now forgive me, and let me worship God.” But Samuel knew that Saul was not truly sorry; and he turned to go away. Then Saul took hold of Samuel’s garment, that Samuel might not go, and the garment rent. Samuel turned round again, and said, “God has rent the king-

dom from thee to-day ; and soon he will give it to a better man than thou." Then Saul cried, "I have sinned ; but honour me now before the people, and let us worship God together." Saul did not like the people to think him wicked ; but he did not care for God's anger ; he did not truly repent ; he was angry and proud, not sorry and humble. He was unhappy because he had lost his kingdom, not because he had displeased God.

Samuel did what Saul wished ; he turned again, and Saul worshipped the Lord. But did God accept Saul's worship ? No, God will not accept the prayers of proud rebellious people ; he turns away, and will not look upon them. Then Samuel commanded king Agag to be brought to him. Agag thought he was safe ; but no, God said he must die. He had been a wicked and cruel king, he had murdered many people ; and now God punished him. Samuel killed him in Gilgal, in obedience to God's command. Then Samuel returned to Ramah, and Saul went home to his house in Gibeah.

CHAPTER CX.

JESSE'S SONS.

SAMUEL never came to Saul again; he could not bear to see that wicked king: for Saul was growing more and more rebellious against God. Samuel remembered the day when he first saw Saul at Ramah; when he talked so kindly to him, and anointed him king, and kissed, and blessed him. Then Saul was humble, and gentle, and obedient; and Samuel hoped he loved God, and wished to serve him. But now Saul was proud, and rebellious, and disobedient. He had forsaken God, and God had forsaken him. Samuel was very unhappy when he thought about this. How sad it is to begin rightly like Saul, and soon to grow weary of well doing, and forget God, and love the world, and Satan, and sin, better than holy things! If we grow tired of God, God will depart from us. If we leave off praying, God will not give us his grace; and then we shall grow worse and worse, and at last die without hope, and without forgiveness. But God does not wish us to perish; he wishes us to

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be saved. He is willing to save all. But we cannot serve and love God without his help; and therefore we must ask him to keep us in the right way. And if we do ask, God promises to hear us, and to keep us in his faith and love, to the end of our lives. God did not keep Saul, because Saul did not pray to be kept.

One day, when Samuel was mourning for Saul, God spoke to him, and said, "Do not mourn any longer for Saul. I will not have him for king, because he has forsaken me. Take a horn of oil, and go to the house of Jesse, in Bethlehem. I have chosen a king among his sons." Then Samuel obeyed God, and went to Bethlehem, and made a sacrifice there, as God told him, and he called Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice. Jesse had eight sons. The seven eldest were at home, but the youngest was in the fields keeping sheep. When Samuel saw Eliab, Jesse's eldest son, he was very much pleased with him; and thought he must be the new king God had chosen." But God did not look at the face, he looked at the heart; he wanted a king who would love and serve him, not a king who was tall and handsome. He said, "I have not chosen this man." Samuel looked at the six other sons

also, but God had chosen none of them. Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Where is thy youngest son? Call him, for we must have him here."

Then Jesse sent out to the field, and brought in his youngest son. His name was David. David was very young. He too was beautiful; but God did not choose him for his beauty. David loved God, and he wished and prayed to love him more. When David was alone in the fields, keeping his sheep, he liked to think of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, who would, at a future time, come and die for poor sinners, who had gone astray like lost sheep. And then, David used to pray in faith, and to play upon his harp, and sing beautiful hymns of praise to God. How pleasant it is when young people begin to love and serve the Lord early, as David did!

When David came into his father's house, God said to Samuel, "Anoint him; this is the king I have chosen." Then Samuel poured oil upon David's head, and anointed him; and all his brothers looked on. David wondered why God should honour him so much, and give him the kingdom; but he was not proud of the honour. He did not want to be king directly;

he waited patiently for the right time. God had given David a better thing than the kingdom. He had given him his Holy Spirit. This made David truly wise. God himself had taught him about Christ, and Heaven, and future things which should happen after David's death. And this made David very happy,—more happy, than the promise of the kingdom.



CHAPTER CXI.

GOLIATH.

THE Israelites' old enemies the Philistines, now came to fight against them again. They pitched their tents on a high mountain, and Saul and his army stood upon another mountain opposite, and there was a valley between the two armies. The Philistines had with them a very bold commander, a great giant, named Goliath. He was very tall, and covered with thick armour; and he had a great sword, and shield, and spear: and he stood, and cried to

the army of Israel, "Why do you come to fight against me? If you can, choose a man, and let him come and fight me, and try to kill me." The Israelites were very much frightened when they heard the proud Philistine speak, and Saul was frightened also.

Jesse's three eldest sons followed Saul to the battle, but David went home to keep his father's sheep at Bethlehem. One day, Jesse called David, and said, "Go now to the camp, and see thy brothers, and ask if they are well; and take them some corn, and ten loaves of bread; and carry these ten cheeses to their captain." David obeyed; he asked a man to keep his sheep while he was away, and went to the camp. When he came near the army, he heard a great shout; the soldiers were just going to begin the battle. Then David made haste, and ran to speak to his brethren. While they were talking, the great giant came out of the Philistines' army, and spoke as he had done before; and David heard him. Then all the Israelites, when they saw Goliath, ran away for fear. But David said, "Who is this Philistine who comes to frighten God's people? What power has he to hurt us, if God is on our side?" Then the eldest brother

spoke very unkindly to David, and said, "Why camest thou here? What hast thou done with the few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou art come down to see the battle." But David answered gently, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?"

Then some of the people went to Saul, and told what David said; and Saul sent for David. When David came to the king, he spoke very boldly, for God made him bold, and he said, "Do not fear this great Philistine; I am ready to go and fight him." But Saul said, "Thou hast not power to conquer him; thou art young, and he is very strong, and has been used to fighting all his life." David answered, "I am a shepherd, and I keep my father's sheep in Bethlehem. One day, a lion and a bear came to my flock, and took away a lamb; and I ran, and killed the lion and the bear, and saved the lamb, and took it out of the lion's mouth, and brought it back to the fold. It was God who gave me strength to kill those great animals, and I know he will give me power now to conquer this wicked Philistine. God is with us, and he will deliver us from our enemies." Then Saul

said, "Go, and the Lord be with thee." Saul gave David all his armour, a helmet, and a spear, and a sword. But David said, "No I do not want these; I have not proved them." So he took them all off, and chose five smooth stones, and put them into his shepherd's bag; and he took a sling, and a staff, and went to meet the giant. Then the Philistine came out, but when he saw David, he laughed at him, and said, "Canst thou conquer me? Come to me, and I will give thy flesh to the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field!" But David answered, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and a spear, and a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. I know that thou art very strong, and that I am weak, and unable of myself to fight thee; but God is with me, and he is stronger than thou. He will give me power to conquer and kill thee; for he can fight without swords and spears, for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands." Then David ran to meet his great enemy. He took a stone, and put it into his sling, and slang it; and the stone went into the forehead of the giant, and he fell down on the ground. Then David ran to the Philistine, and

stood upon him, and took the sword of the giant, and slew him, and cut off his head ; for David had no sword of his own. Then all the Philistines, when they saw that their commander was dead, fled ; and the Israelites followed, and killed very many of them. The Israelites returned shouting for joy, and David took the giant's head, and brought it to Jerusalem.

This is a wonderful story. How could young David, without armour, conquer the great strong Philistine ? It was not David's strength, nor his sling, nor his stone, that gained the victory ; they had no power ; it was David's God who conquered, and he alone. David looked in faith to God for help, and he gave him the victory. We have enemies to fight too ; not great soldiers like Goliath, but enemies who fight against our souls. Satan is our great enemy ; he is stronger than Goliath. And have we power to conquer him ? No ; we are like David, weak and helpless in ourselves ; but we can conquer Satan, as David conquered Goliath. We must fight in God's strength, not in our own. We must ask God to fight for us, and then we shall be enabled to conquer, and gain the victory.

CHAPTER CXII.

THE TWO FRIENDS.

WHEN Saul saw David going to fight with the giant, he called Abner, the captain of the army, and asked, "Who is that young man?" Saul had known David before; for, when the evil spirit made him unhappy, David had often played to him on the harp. But Saul had forgotten David now. When the fight was over, Abner called David, and led him to Saul, with the giant's head in his hand. Then Saul asked, "Who art thou, young man?" And David said, "I am the son of Jesse of Bethlehem." Jonathan, Saul's son, was standing by; and when he saw David, and heard him speak, he began to love him very much. David did not go home again to Bethlehem. Saul took him to live with him at court, and David was captain over the soldiers. It was a great honour to David to live at court with the king; but he was not proud of his honour. He was humble, and respectful, and obedient. He always remembered his duty to Saul, and tried to please him in everything. This was very wise and

right in David. The Bible tells us all, to be humble and respectful to those who rule over us.

Saul's servants loved David, because he was so kind, and gentle, and humble, and wise; and Saul, too, loved him at first. Jonathan and David were very dear friends: they loved one another like brothers, and Jonathan was kind and generous to David, and gave him his own robe, and his bow, and his sword, and his girdle. Jonathan served God; and when he saw that David served him too, Jonathan made him his friend. They used to talk together, and pray together, and read God's law, and sing his praises together; they felt very happy, because they knew that God was their friend. They believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who should, at a future time, come and die for them; and, when they offered up their sacrifices, they prayed in faith, to "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." How pleasant it is when young people begin to love and serve God together! We ought always to choose friends who love God, not friends who love the world. Worldly friendships soon end; they cannot comfort us when we are in sorrow,

nor when we die ; and we cannot meet worldly friends in Heaven. But holy friendships never end ; we may part from our dear friends for a little time, but soon we shall meet them in heaven, and never lose them again.

While David and Jonathan were living so happily together, Saul was very miserable. Why were David and Jonathan happy ? Because God was their friend, and his blessing was upon them. And why was Saul miserable ? Because God was his enemy, and he had none to comfort him. His riches, and kingdom, and power, and servants, could not make him happy. "There is no peace to the wicked."



CHAPTER CXIII.

SAUL'S HATRED TO DAVID.

SAUL now began to hate David. Why ? Because he was jealous of him, for he thought the people loved David more than they loved himself. After the battle and the victory, when Saul and all his people were going home, the

women came out to meet them ; and they sang, and played, and danced, and shouted for joy. They sang, "Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands." This made the king very angry. He thought they gave very little honour to him, and a great deal of honour to David, and that they loved David best, and would make him king. So Saul grew very jealous, and looked unkindly at David ; though David had done no wrong. Jealousy is often very sinful. We ought to be glad to see good people honoured and loved. It is very wrong to want to have all the praise ourselves, and to feel angry when others are praised. We ought to ask God to take jealousy and selfishness out of our hearts. But Saul did not ask God to forgive his sinful feelings. He did not wish to be kind, and humble, and gentle.

The next day, the evil spirit came into Saul again ; and David took his harp and began to play, and tried to quiet him. But David's harp did not take away Saul's passion now. Saul had a spear in his hand, and he tried to throw it at David while he played : but David turned away, and the spear passed without hurting him. When Saul saw that God was David's friend,

he was afraid ; he could not kill David, but he sent him away, because he did not like to see him. He made David captain over the soldiers ; and they all loved him, and the people loved him ; and God loved him too, and kept him wherever he went. David conquered and killed many of the Philistines. Saul hoped he would be slain in battle ; but God brought him back safely.

David married Michal, Saul's daughter, and she loved him very much ; but Saul hated him more and more, and tried again to kill him, and commanded Jonathan and all his servants to put David to death. Jonathan was very much frightened to hear this sad command, and he went to David, and said, " My father seeketh to kill thee ; go now and hide, and I will talk to my father about thee, and tell thee what he says." So David went and hid himself, and Jonathan went home to Saul, and began to talk to him. Jonathan spoke very gently and respectfully to his father, for he honoured him, as his father and his king. He said, " Do not sin against David ; do not slay him ; for he is very good, and never hurt nor disobeyed thee. Remember how bravely he fought the Philistines,

and conquered the great giant. Thou didst rejoice in what he did then, why wilt thou slay him now?" Saul attended to Jonathan, and promised not to slay David, so Jonathan called his friend, and brought him back.

Jonathan did great good, because he was kind and gentle. Solomon says, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Jonathan turned away his father's wrath by softness and gentleness. When people are angry and passionate, we should try to speak kindly and affectionately to them; we ought to tell them that anger and passion are very sinful, but we must tell them so gently, not angrily. And we should pray God to turn away their wrath, because he alone has power to quiet sinful passions. Try to be like Jonathan; kind, and affectionate, and humble, as he was.

CHAPTER CXIV.

DAVID AT RAMAH.

Soon after, there was a new war with the Philistines, and David went out and conquered them; and then Saul's jealous temper returned. One day, Saul was sitting in his house: the evil spirit was in him, and David was playing to him upon the harp. Saul had a spear in his hand, and again Satan tempted him to throw it at David to kill him. But David saw what Saul was doing, and escaped out of the room; and the spear went into the wall, and did not hurt him. Then Saul sent servants to take David in his own house; but Michal let him down out of a window, and he escaped to Samuel at Ramah.

David had a sad story to tell Samuel about Saul. It made the old prophet very unhappy, because he remembered that in past times Saul had been humble and obedient, and Samuel had loved him then. There was a school of the prophets at Naioth in Ramah; and there Samuel went, and he took David with him. It must have been very pleasant to David to be with

these holy people, talking and prophesying of the things of God, far away from cruel angry Saul. But Saul soon heard where David was, and sent messengers to Ramah to take him prisoner. And did God let the enemies of David hurt him? No—when the messengers came to Ramah, God gave them the wonderful spirit of prophecy; and instead of taking David, they stood by him, and Samuel, and the other holy men, and prophesied too. Then Saul sent more messengers to Ramah, but they began to prophesy. At last Saul went himself; for he was very angry, and determined that David should not escape. But when Saul came to Ramah, the spirit came upon him, and he prophesied too, with all the others, before Samuel: and Saul's wish and power to hurt David were taken from him.

But was Saul's heart made new now? Was his sinful temper gone, and was he beginning to love and serve God? No; Saul praised God, and said many holy things, perhaps, when he prophesied at Ramah, with his lips, but he did not feel them in his heart. He did not repent, nor ask for pardon, nor pray for a new heart; and therefore the evil spirit soon came again, and Saul was cruel and passionate, as he was.

before. Many people, like Saul, know much about God, and the Bible, and the holy things we read there, who never go to Heaven. Knowing and talking about these things cannot save our souls. We must love God in our hearts, and have our sins washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ, and be made new and clean by the Holy Spirit, and then we shall be taken to Heaven; but knowledge alone will never take us there. God sees our hearts; he knows if we truly love him, or if, like Saul, we only pretend to love him. We cannot deceive God: let us serve him in truth.



CHAPTER CXV.

DAVID'S ESCAPE.

DAVID escaped from Ramah, and went again to Jonathan, and told him all his trouble. David said, "I know thy father Saul is seeking to kill me. He does not tell thee this, because he knows how it would vex thee; but I am quite sure that there is but a step between me

and death.” Then Jonathan was very sorry, and he said, “Tell me, what can I do to save thee?” David answered, “To-morrow Saul has a great feast, and he thinks I shall be there; let me hide myself instead of going to the feast. My father has a great sacrifice for his family at Bethlehem, and I wish to be there. If Saul enquires for me, tell him, I asked to go to my father’s sacrifice at Bethlehem, and see if he is very angry or not.” Jonathan said, “Let us go out now into the field, and we will think what we must do.”

So they both went out, and walked in the field, and then Jonathan said, “To-morrow I will talk to my father, and if I see that he is kind and friendly, I will send and tell thee; or if he is angry, then too I will tell thee, and send thee away safely. But if we part, and never see one another again, do not forget me; love me, and think about me while I live; and after I am dead, remember me, and be kind to my children and family, and do not forget my love to thee.” Then David promised never to forget Jonathan; and to love his children, and be kind to them after Jonathan’s death. But David and Jonathan could not stay long to talk;

David must hide himself very quickly; and so Jonathan said, "Go now; and, after three days, come again to the place where thou didst hide before. Then I will come, and bring a lad with me; and I will shoot arrows, and tell the lad to go and bring them to me. If I tell the lad that the arrow is near to him, know that all is safe; but if I tell him that the arrows are far off beyond him, then know that there is danger, and make haste, and escape." David understood this; and then he went away, and Jonathan came home.

Next day was Saul's feast. David was not there; Saul looked for him, but he could not see him; and he wondered where he was, but said nothing. Next day again, David was not at the feast, and Saul began to be angry, and asked, "Where is David? He was not at the feast yesterday, and I do not see him here to-day: why does he not come?" Jonathan said, "He asked me to let him go home to a sacrifice at Bethlehem, because his father wanted him to be there." Then Saul was very angry, and he said, "David shall die: send, and bring him here, for he shall surely die." But Jonathan answered, "Why must David die? He has

done no wrong.” Then Saul grew still more angry, and he threw a spear at Jonathan, to kill him, because he loved David. But Jonathan arose quickly, and went away from the table. He could not stay at the feast, because he was so afraid of his father, and so unhappy about his dear friend.

The third day, Jonathan went again into the field to meet David, and he took a little boy with him. Jonathan had his bow and arrows; and he shot an arrow a long way off, and said to the boy, “Run, and bring me the arrow; there it is beyond thee.” Why did Jonathan shoot the arrow beyond the boy? Because Jonathan wanted David to understand that there was danger, and that he must escape directly. David was hidden in the field, and heard what Jonathan said. The boy brought the arrow to his master, and then Jonathan sent him home. The boy knew nothing about David. When he was gone, David arose and came to Jonathan. He knew that he must go now, and part from his dear friend; and that perhaps they would never meet again. It was a sad time. David and Jonathan embraced and kissed one another, and wept very much. And then Jonathan said,

“Go in peace; God will be with us; he will be our friend. Do not forget me, nor my children after me; and I will never forget thee.” So David went away, and Jonathan returned home.

This was a sad parting. It is always sad to lose our dear friends. But if friends love God, then they know that he is with them, and that he will take care of them, and bring them all safely to their home in Heaven. There dear friends will meet in joy, and never part again. J  sus is our best friend. He “is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” We can never lose him. Wherever we go, he is with us. He always loves and takes care of us, if we are his people. He loves us more than Jonathan loved David. We must ask him to be our friend, and then we shall be peaceful and happy when all our earthly friends are gone.

CHAPTER CXVI.

DAVID AT NOB.

WHERE did David go when he had parted from Jonathan? First, he went to Nob, in Benjamin, where the tabernacle was; and there he saw Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech wondered very much to see David, and he asked why he came. Did David tell him? No; David was afraid to speak the truth; he was tempted to tell a lie. He said, "King Saul sent me here upon secret business. He commanded me not to say what the business is. Give me, I pray thee, some of the bread I see there." The bread which Ahimelech had was the shew bread. It was hallowed bread; the priests alone might eat it; but Ahimelech gave some to David, and the men with him, because they were hungry, and could get no common bread. Then David asked the priest to give him some armour. Ahimelech had there the sword of Goliath, and he showed it to David. David was very much pleased to see it again, for it made him remember how God had helped him to conquer and kill the great

giant, a little time before. Then Ahimelech gave David the sword, and let him go.

Where did David go? He went to Gath to king Achish. Achish was a bad king; but he was a Philistine, and his people did not like David to be there, because they remembered what he had done, in past time, to the Philistines. And David was unhappy at Gath; for he was afraid of Achish and his people; he thought that, perhaps, they might kill him, or tell Saul about him. Did David trust in God in his danger? Yes; but David was a poor weak sinner, and very often fear made him forget God, and do what was wrong. Fear had made him tell a lie to Ahimelech, at Nob; and now fear made him deceitful again to Achish, at Gath. He pretended to be mad, and ran about wildly, and scratched upon the doors, and did many more foolish things. Then Achish sent him away, and David went and hid in a cave; and there all his family and friends came to him, to comfort him.

Poor David! How sad it was that he must hide in a cave to save his life! But when he was so unhappy he always had a friend to take care of him. Who was David's kind friend?

Was it Jonathan, or his father, or mother? They loved him, and comforted him when they could; but, sometimes, they could not see him; and they had no power to save him from cruel Saul. It was God who was David's best friend; he was with David everywhere, and kept him safely, and heard all his prayers. And now, David remembered how he had sinned against this kind friend. He thought about the lie and deceit which had made God angry; and he prayed for pardon. God heard David's prayer; for it was a sincere prayer, not a careless or hypocritical prayer, like Saul's. When David sinned, he was humble and sorry; but he knew that God was willing to forgive him, and he asked him to blot out all his sins, and to help him to do right. And when God had heard his prayer, he had forgiven all his sins, for Jesus' sake, then David felt happy again; and he sang psalms of praise and thankfulness to God.

CHAPTER CXVII.

THE PRIESTS KILLED.

WHEN David was in the tabernacle at Nob, talking to the priests, a man was there named Doeg. He was keeper of Saul's cattle; a very wicked man, and an enemy of David. Saul heard that David was escaping from place to place, and he tried to find him, that he might kill him, and he asked his servants to tell him all they knew about David, and who were his friends who helped him to escape. Then Doeg said, "I saw David come to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest, and Ahimelech gave him food, and the sword of the giant Goliath." Then Saul was very angry, and he sent for Ahimelech, and all the priests that were at Nob.

When the priests came to Saul, he spoke very angrily to them, and said to Ahimelech, "Why hast thou given bread and a sword to David my enemy, and helped him to fight against me, and kill me?" Ahimelech answered, "David is not an enemy; he is faithful, and obedient to the king; and I know nothing of all this." But

Saul would not attend to Ahimelech, and he commanded the servants, who stood by, to put Ahimelech, and all the other priests, to death. The servants feared God more than their cruel master did; and they would not make God angry, and kill these holy priests. Then Saul turned to Doeg, and told him to kill the priests. Doeg was glad to obey; and he drew his sword, and slew them all, eighty-five in number, and then went to Nob, and killed the people there; men, and women, and children. Only one son of Ahimelech, named Abiathar, escaped, and ran to David, and told him the sad story. David felt very unhappy when he heard it. He remembered his own wicked deceit to poor Ahimelech, and he might perhaps have thought, "These good men are killed because of me. It was I who went to Ahimelech, and told him a lie, and deceived him. He did not know why I came; and he believed me, and gave me all I wanted; and then Doeg accused him to Saul, and Saul has put him to death; my wicked lie has helped to kill him." David spoke very kindly to Abiathar, and made him come and live with him; and they comforted one another.

How very wicked Saul had become! He began with impatience and disobedience; now, Satan made him a murderer of God's people. How dreadful it is to be angry and passionate! Wicked tempers grow worse and worse every day, if they are not subdued by God's grace. God had gone away from Saul, because Saul would not serve him; and now, Satan and his own wicked heart taught him to do these dreadful things.

Abiathar was the only priest left of Eli's family. Many years before, God had said that he would destroy them, because Eli had not punished his wicked sons. God never forgets what he says. He forgave Eli; but he punished his sin. See what a fearful thing it is to make God angry!

CHAPTER CXVIII.

DAVID'S WANDERINGS.

DAVID was not alone in his wanderings. Many men came to him to help him; they followed wherever he went; he was their captain, and they obeyed him. Some of David's soldiers were very brave men. The Philistines were now fighting again against Israel; and David and his men used to go, and try to conquer them. One day, David was very tired and thirsty with long fighting. The Philistines' camp was then at Bethlehem; and there was a well of water at Bethlehem; but David and his men were afraid to drink it, because their enemies were near. When David was so thirsty, he cried, "Oh! that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem!" David's soldiers heard what he said; and they bravely ran in through their enemies, to the well, and drew the water, and brought it to David. They loved their master so much, that they did not think about their own danger. Was David glad to drink the water? No; he saw his friends in danger, and he did not like them to suffer for

him ; and when they brought the water to him, he said, " No, I will not drink it : my brave soldiers have suffered more than I, and they are thirsty too ; this water is too good for me ; I will give it to God." So he poured it out an offering to the Lord.

David and his men were not selfish ; they did not think of their own wants. Try, like them, to be kind, and generous, and self-denying ; whenever you are in pain remember that other people suffer as well as you, and try to think of their sorrows, more than of your own.

David had something to refresh him, better than the water of Bethlehem. He had God's blessed Spirit to comfort him. Water could only refresh his body ; but God could refresh his soul. David was happy in all his troubles, because God was with him.

The Philistines now came to fight against a place named Keilah ; and David asked God if he should go, and try to save it. He was right to ask, for we ought always to ask God's blessing before we do any thing. God told David to go, and promised to help him ; so David went, and fought against the Philistines, and saved the people of Keilah. When Saul heard that David

was there, he thought he could kill him, and that he could not escape. But David again asked help from God, and was delivered. Wicked people cannot hurt the servants of God without his permission, and God did not permit Saul to hurt David. David now wandered about in the woods and deserts, for fear of Saul. It was a sad life ; but he trusted in God, and was peaceful and happy. He wrote many beautiful psalms when he was wandering and hiding in these wild places.

Where was Jonathan ? Did he ever see his friend David again ? Yes, Jonathan had not forgotten him ; and, when he heard where David was, he went to see him secretly in the wood. David and Jonathan were very glad to meet again for a little time. They had much to say to one another. Jonathan comforted David in the right way ; he told him to trust in God. He said, “ Do not fear ; my father cannot hurt thee, because God has promised to keep thee, and to make thee king ; and he never forgets his promises.” Then David and Jonathan prayed together, and kissed one another for the last time : they never met again on earth. But now, their happy souls are in heaven together ; all their

sorrows are ended; they will never weep again.

David and Jonathan both suffered very much while they lived. Perhaps we may never suffer like them; but we must all have some sorrow in this world; for "man is born to trouble." But if we have God for our friend, as David and Jonathan had, then we shall have comfort in all our sorrows here, and eternal joy in Heaven when we die.

CHAPTER CXIX.

SAUL IN THE CAVE.

WHEN Saul had finished fighting with the Philistines, he went into the wilderness, and many soldiers with him; and they all wandered about among the rocks, trying to find David. But God still kept David in safety from his enemies. At last, Saul came to a cave, and went into it to rest; for he was tired. The cave was very large, it could hold many people; and Saul and his men were not alone in it. Who were

there besides? David and his soldiers were in the cave; but Saul did not see them, because they were in another part of it; so he went in, and lay down, and was soon asleep. David's men saw Saul come into the cave, and said to their master, "See, there is Saul; God has given him into thy hand." Then David arose and went to Saul. There he lay asleep; he had no power to hurt David, and David could kill him if he liked. And did he kill Saul? No; David had no angry feelings in his heart; he did not wish to hurt his enemy; but he went quietly, and cut off a piece of Saul's robe. When David came again to his men, he felt sorry. Why? Because he had not killed Saul? No; David was sorry because he had cut off part of Saul's robe. Because he feared he had been unkind to Saul: for he knew he ought to love him, though he was his enemy; and to respect and honour him, because he was his king. Then David commanded his servants not to kill Saul, nor hurt him.

When Saul awoke, he arose to go away. He did not know what David had done; but David cried out, and said to him, "My Lord, the king!" Saul turned round; and David bowed respect-

fully before him, and said, "God to-day gave thee into my power, when thou wast asleep in the cave; but I remembered that thou art a king chosen by God, and therefore I did not hurt thee. I never did thee any wrong; why dost thou try to kill me? God knows that I am not thine enemy." Then Saul began to weep, and said, "Is it thy voice, my son David?" Why did Saul weep? Because he felt how unkind he had been to David, and how kind David was to him. David's gentleness made Saul gentle too.

Saul said, "Thou hast been more righteous than I. Thou hast rewarded me good, though I rewarded thee evil." Then Saul asked David to spare his family after his death: for Saul knew that God would give David the kingdom. David promised this, and Saul went home; and David's kindness made Saul kind for a little time.

If we have enemies, we ought to act towards them as David did towards his enemy. The Bible says, "Love your enemies." When people are unkind to us, we must try to be kind and forgiving to them. When our enemies are in sorrow, we must comfort them, and help them, and try to make them happy. If they are wicked, we ought to talk gently to them, and

beg of them to repent of their sin, and turn to God. And we ought to pray God to forgive them, and to give them new hearts, and make them kind, and gentle, and holy. If we do not forgive, God will not forgive us. Let us pray God to make us like the meek and gentle Jesus. He forgave his enemies. When he was upon the cross, he cried, "Father, forgive them." He even died to save people who did not care for him, nor love him: "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." We were his enemies; but he spared us, and loved us, and bore our punishment for us, that we might live with him in Heaven for ever.



CHAPTER CXX.

NABAL AND ABIGAIL.

WHEN David was wandering about in the wilderness of Engedi and Paran, he and his men often wanted food; but they never tried to get it in a wrong way, nor to steal from those near them.

There was a man who lived at Maon named

Nabal. He was very rich, and had great possessions in Carmel : sheep, and goats, and asses, and camels. He lived near the place where David now was, and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. David knew that Nabal was very rich, and he sent messengers to him, to ask for food. David's servants spoke very respectfully to Nabal; they did not rudely ask for what they wanted; for David taught them to honour and respect all men. But Nabal was a selfish and cruel man. He did not care for other people; he tried only to please himself. All his money, and all his possessions, he kept for his own use; he never thought about the poor and hungry, who had no food, and no home. How sad selfishness is! It is a great sin, and makes God very angry. Why does God give some people riches? Does he wish them to keep all themselves, and give none away? No, when God gives riches to people, he likes them to be kind and generous; he wishes them to do good with what they have. At the day of judgment, God will punish those rich people who have not rightly spent what he gave them.

Nabal was very angry with David's servants; instead of giving them any thing, he drove them

away in a passion, and sent them back again to David. When David heard of Nabal's unkindness and passion, he was very angry too. Was David right to be angry? No; he ought to have been patient and forgiving, as he was when Saul was unkind to him. David loved God, and tried to serve him; but many times he did what was wrong; for he was sinful, like ourselves, and had no power in himself to do right; and sometimes he forgot to ask God to help him to resist his sinful passions.

So David told his men to take their swords, and he made all ready to go to Nabal, to kill him, because he had been unkind, and selfish, and cruel. But Nabal had a wife named Abigail. She was not like her husband; she was gentle, and kind, and willing to give away what she could. When Abigail heard about Nabal's cruelty, she was very sorry. She knew that David was a good man, and that he was in great trouble, and trying to hide from Saul; and Abigail wished to be kind to him and his men. So she called her servants, and told them to make ready some sheep, and corn, and figs, and grapes, and to put them upon asses. and take them to

David; and she followed, but she did not tell Nabal where she was going.

When Abigail met with David, she came down from the ass, and fell on her face before him. Then she spoke very gently to David, and asked him not to be angry, but to forgive her wicked husband. Abigail loved God; and she told David how wrong it is to be passionate and angry: but she spoke very respectfully when she said this, and reminded David that God could preserve him, and punish his enemies; and that, therefore, he must be patient, and leave all to God. When David heard Abigail talk so gently, he became gentle too. He felt he had done wrong, and he thanked God for sending Abigail to keep him from shedding blood. It was kind of Abigail to warn David; and it was very right and humble of David to attend to what she said. So Abigail gave the present to David, and he thanked her, and she went home. And David and his men had food to eat now, without fighting and shedding blood. It was not right for David to punish Nabal, but God punished him. God must punish our enemies, not we.

When Abigail came home, she found Nabal making a great feast with his friends. They

were eating and drinking, and very merry. It was wicked merriment. They loved their own pleasure and ease; but they did not think of their poor hungry neighbours; they did not care for God, nor holy things: all their thoughts were about this world; eating, and drinking, and pleasing themselves. Abigail did not stay with this wicked company; she did not speak to Nabal then, but next morning, she told him about David; and all that she had done. Nabal felt frightened and unhappy at what his wife said. He knew he had done wrong; but Abigail's reproof did not make him repent, and turn to God. He had no comfort now. His riches and his worldly company could do him no good; and God was not his friend. He lived only ten days after; for then God smote him, and he died, and his soul went to be judged for all the sinful things he had done when alive. Let us ask God to teach us to set our affections on things above, not on the foolish and wicked things of this world, which will soon pass away. If we are God's people, we shall have a better possession in Heaven than any we can have here.

CHAPTER CXXI.

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO SAUL.

Good old Samuel was now dead. He died and was buried at Ramah; and all Israel wept and mourned for him. But Samuel's happy soul went to Heaven, where is no crying nor sorrow. Samuel began very young to love and serve God, and he loved and served him all his life long. He was not like Saul, who began well, but soon grew tired of doing right. Saul was only pretending to love God; he did not truly love him; his heart had never been made new by the Holy Spirit. But Samuel was a true servant of God. When he was a little boy, he prayed God to teach him to love and serve him, and God heard his prayer. And when Samuel grew older, he still prayed that God would keep him in the right way. And God never forsook his faithful servant. He took care of Samuel all his life, he comforted him in sorrow, he loved him when he grew old; and when he died, he took his happy soul to be with him in glory forever. Was Samuel sorry that he began so soon to serve God? No; he was happy all his life, because

God was his friend. We cannot begin too soon to serve God ; we should give him our whole life ; we should love him when we are young, and love him more and more every day, till we die, and go to Heaven, to love and serve him for ever.

David was now in the wilderness of Ziph, and Saul again went to seek him there. Had Saul forgotten his promise to be kind to David ? Yes ; Saul's sorrow for his cruelty was soon gone. It was not the right sorrow. Right sorrow makes people turn to God, and ask for forgiveness for the past, and grace for the future. Saul did not do this. He went home, but he did not pray ; he did not care for God's pardon ; and soon Satan came to him again, and his wicked temper returned, and he forgot his promise, and his sorrow, and went again to try to kill David.

David saw Saul come into the wilderness, but Saul did not see him ; so he put a pillow upon the ground, and lay down, and fell asleep, and all his men slept too. Then David arose, and went to Saul. Why did David go ? Did he want to kill him ? No ; David did not wish to

kill his enemy ; but he went and looked at him while he slept.

Saul was lying upon the ground on the pillow ; his spear was by him, and the soldiers were sleeping around him. It was night, all was quiet ; none saw David and his men. Then one of David's servants said, " Let us kill Saul now ; all his soldiers are asleep, and he is in our power ; he cannot defend himself." But David said, " No, we must not kill him, though he is our enemy. God will punish him when he pleases, but we have no right to punish him. He is our king, and we are his servants, and therefore, we must respect and honour Saul. David had learnt to be patient, and gentle, and forgiving to his enemies.

David took away Saul's spear, and a bottle of water which was near the pillow, and went to the top of a hill afar off ; and then he cried to Saul's captain whose name was Abner, and said, " What are you doing ? Why do you not keep your king ? See where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster." Saul knew David's voice, and he said, " Is this thy voice, my son David ?" Then David said, " Yes, it is my voice. Why

dost thou come, seeking to kill me? What evil have I done?" Saul again felt sorry, and said, "I have sinned, but I will no more do thee wrong." Then David willingly forgave Saul; and spoke gently to him; and one of Saul's servants came, and took back the spear and the bottle of water; and then Saul blessed David, and they parted.

Saul and David never met again. It was pleasant to David to part in peace, and not in anger. But Saul was not truly penitent. He was at peace with David, but he was not at peace with God. When Saul and David died, they could not meet in Heaven. Saul belonged to Satan's family, David belonged to God's family; and therefore they had not the same home,—they must part for ever.

CHAPTER CXXII.

DAVID AT ZIKLAG.

DAVID now began to be tired of wandering about in fear of Saul. He thought that perhaps Saul would forget his promise : and come again, and try to kill him ; so he determined to go to the Philistines' country ; and ask Achish, king of Gath, to take care of him. Then David called his family, and his soldiers ; and they all went to Gath. Achish was very kind to David, and gave him a city named Ziklag, and there David lived in safety. Saul knew where he was, but he did not again try to kill him.

Was David right to go to Achish ? No, it was very wrong of him to go. David forgot then to trust in God, who had kept him safely so many years, and had promised to keep him always. David's faith was very weak now : he trusted in Achish more than he trusted in God. It was wrong, too, of David to go to live in an idolatrous country. The Philistines were God's enemies, and Israel's enemies ; they worshipped idols, not the true God : perhaps they might tempt David to idolatry too. David made

God angry, because he thought of his own safety, and of worldly things, more than he thought of God.

When we are in sorrow and trouble, we ought to trust in God alone for comfort, not in the people and things of the world; and we should at all times, try to be with those who love and serve God. It is very wrong to seek worldly company, and to choose friends who do not know God; they may teach us to be wicked too. Our friends ought to be God's friends.

David forgot all this, when he went to live with the Philistines. He did not ask God's help and guidance before he went. He trusted in his own wisdom and strength, and therefore he did wrong. We all do wrong if we trust to ourselves. We have no goodness, no wisdom, of our own; let us remember, then, always to ask God to guide us in what we do, and wherever we go.

David was not idle when he lived at Ziklag. He went out, and fought against the Amalekites, and conquered, and killed them. This was right, for God had commanded them to be destroyed. But when David came back to Ziklag, he did something that was very wrong. He

tried to deceive Achish. Achish asked him, where he had been fighting. David was afraid to say that he had destroyed the Amalekites; he thought it might displease Achish, so he said he had been fighting south of Judah. Then Achish was glad, for he thought David had forsaken his own people Israel, and was fighting against them, and that he would come and help Achish to conquer the Israelites.

Soon after this, Achish made his army ready, and called David and his men, and told him to go with him to fight against Israel. What could David do now? He could not go and fight against his own people; and he was afraid to tell Achish the truth, and to confess how deceitful he had been. He felt very sorry for his foolish sinful lie; it had made God angry, and now it made David unhappy. So he prepared to go with the army of Achish; but he felt very sad as he stood with the soldiers of the Philistines, ready to fight against his own dear country. God made him feel sorry, to punish him for his wicked deceit, for God always punishes his people when they sin; but he punishes them in kindness, to make them repent, and return humbly to him. But God helped David in this time

of difficulty. When the lords of the Philistines saw David and his soldiers, they asked why those Israelites were in their army. Achish told them, that David, their commander, was his friend, and had lived with him a long time, and would help him to fight against the Israelites. But the lords of the Philistines would not consent to this: they would not have David in their army, for they thought he would not be a true friend to them, and so they would not trust him. Achish was sorry: but he called David and his men, and told them what the lords of the Philistines had said. David pretended to be very sorry, and said, "Why may not I go to fight the king's enemies? Have I not been thy faithful servant a long time?" Achish answered, "I know that thou art good in my sight; but the Philistines have said, David shall not go with us to the battle." So David and his men returned to Ziklag, and the Philistines went on to Jezreel, to fight against Israel.

CHAPTER CXXIII.

ZIKLAG BURNT.

God was very kind to David in keeping him from fighting against Israel; but he punished him for his conduct at Ziklag, because he wanted David to be more humble, and more sorry for his sin.

When David and his men came back to Ziklag, they saw the city in ruins. The walls were thrown down, the houses were burnt, and their wives and families were gone. How was this? The Amalekites had come, while David was away, and conquered Ziklag, and taken all the people prisoners. David and his men had no home now; and when they looked round, and saw their city in ruins, and thought about their dear wives and children, they all began to weep. They wept till they had no more power to weep. They were all unhappy; but David was more unhappy than his men. Why? Because he remembered his own sin, and because his soldiers were angry, and spoke unkindly to him. David was in great sorrow,—where did he go for comfort? Had he any kind friend to help

him in his sorrow? Yes; he had one friend, who was ready to comfort him; and this was God. David had forgotten his best friend a long time; he had trusted in Achish, and the Philistines, more than in God, and had made friends of them. But Achish and the Philistines could not help David now; he was alone, without an earthly friend to comfort him; and then he remembered his friend in Heaven, and felt very sorry he had so displeased and forgotten him. David prayed, and asked forgiveness for his sinful deceit; and God heard his prayer, and forgave his sin. God had not forgotten David, he was waiting for him to repent, and he was ready to pardon. When we sin like David, we ought to pray for forgiveness, like David too. God is always willing to pardon. He says, "Return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy."

David felt happy when God had forgiven him. But how could he get back his family and his possessions? He asked God; and he told him to follow after his enemies, and promised to help him. And did David conquer the cruel Amalekites? Yes, he soon overtook them. He found them all eating, and drinking and dancing for

joy, because they had taken away so much riches from Ziklag. But David and his men soon smote all the Amalekites; and took away their own wives and children, and brought them home in safety.

How kind God was to David after all David's forgetfulness of God! David felt very thankful, and very humble when he remembered his sins; and he learned in future to trust not in himself, but in God alone. We must ask God to give us his Holy Spirit, to teach us and help us every day we live. Jesus says, "Without me ye can do nothing."



CHAPTER CXXIV.

THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

WHERE was Saul this long time? He was still at his house, unhappy and discontented: the evil spirit troubling him more and more. The Philistines now came to fight against Israel, and Saul gathered together all his soldiers at Gilboa. But he felt very much frightened

when he looked upon the army of his enemies, for he knew that he had not God to fight for him. How sad it is to be in trouble, and not to have God for our friend!

Saul went and asked God to help him; but had no answer. Saul had forsaken God; now God forsook him. Saul had no answer, because he did not pray humbly; he was not truly sorry for his sin. He was frightened and miserable, but he was not penitent and humble.

What could Saul do now? Where did he go for help? Did he pray again to God, and ask for a new heart, and a right spirit? No, Saul was soon tired of prayer, for he did not care for God's blessing and forgiveness. He called his servants, and asked them if they knew a witch who could tell him what he wanted to know. The witches were wicked women who pretended to have the power of raising dead people, and of foretelling future things. God was very angry with these wicked people, and had commanded them to be put to death. But Saul was now grown so foolish, and so wicked, that he wished to ask advice of a witch, and not of God, nor of his holy prophets.

Saul's servants told him there was a witch

living at Endor; so he changed his dress, that people might not know him, and went secretly, by night, to Endor. Saul came to the house where this wicked woman lived, and asked her to raise a dead man to life for him. The woman did not know Saul; and she refused at first to do what he wished, for she was afraid of being put to death. But Saul told her not to fear; and promised she should not be punished. Then she said, "Whom shall I bring up?" And Saul told her to bring up Samuel. The poor foolish woman had no power to raise Samuel, his soul was safe in Heaven, never to come again into a world of sorrow, and his body was crumbling to dust in the grave. But God showed his power by causing a figure like Samuel to come up, and speak to Saul. When the woman saw the figure coming up out of the ground, she was very much frightened, and cried out for fear. Then Saul looked too. What did he see? He saw the figure of an old man; he thought it was Samuel, and he bowed down to the ground. Then the figure asked, "Why hast thou called me up?" Saul said, "I am sore distressed; the Philistines make war against me; God is gone from me; and answers me no more, and I have called thee

to tell me what I shall do." Then the figure said, "Why dost thou ask of me, if the Lord is thine enemy. He has departed from thee, and given the kingdom to David, because thou obeyedst not his voice. The Philistines will fight against Israel; and Israel will be conquered; and to-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me." The figure said no more: in a moment it was gone.

What did Saul do? He fell down on the ground in fear and horror. He was very miserable; he had now no hope; to-morrow he must die; his body must fall in the battle-field; and where must his soul go? Could it go to Heaven? No; he was not ready for Heaven. Satan was in his heart, not God's Holy Spirit. Satan was his master, and his father. Saul had been Satan's servant many years; and when he died he must go and dwell with Satan for ever.

The woman understood now who Saul was; and she and his servants tried to comfort him. She spoke kindly to him; and made ready a fat calf, and bread for him to eat. But could all this do Saul any good now? No; he was going to die, and God alone can comfort people in

death. But Saul could not go to God for comfort. It was too late; he had forsaken God, and God had cast him off for ever.

Saul arose from the ground, and ate what the woman made ready, and then he and his servants went away. It was night; Saul's last night; to-morrow he must be in another world.



CHAPTER CXXV.

THE DEATH OF SAUL.

SAUL could not sleep that sad night; and the next morning he went to the battle where he was to die. The battle was in mount Gilboa. The Philistines conquered, and many of the Israelites fell down dead on the field; for God was not fighting for his people now.

The Philistines followed after Saul, and shot him with their arrows, and sorely wounded him. Then he knew that his enemies would soon come and kill him, and he was very much afraid, and called his armour-bearer, and asked him to kill him, that he might not be put to death by the

cruel Philistines. But the armour-bearer was afraid to kill Saul; he would not murder his king; so Saul took a sword, and fell upon it, and died. He murdered himself. He died in his sin; and there was, therefore, no hope that his soul could be saved: self-murderers have no time to ask for pardon.

When the armour-bearer looked at Saul, and saw that he was dead, he took a sword, and fell upon it, and died too. And the Israelites saw that Saul and his sons were dead; and they all ran from their cities, and left their houses; and the Philistines came and lived in them.

Where was Jonathan? The next day, when the Philistines came to look at the field of battle, they found Jonathan, and his brothers, and Saul, all lying dead upon the ground. Jonathan was dead with his father; but Jonathan's soul was not now with Saul's soul. Their bodies were together; but their souls were parted for ever. Where was Jonathan now? His poor body was lying dead, and covered with blood, upon mount Gilboa, but his happy soul was in heaven, rejoicing before God. Jonathan was ready to die. He had begun to love God when young, and well, and happy; and God did not forget

Jonathan when he was in trouble, and danger, and death. Jonathan's sins had been all washed away, and his heart had been made new and clean; and now he was in heaven, to be happy for ever, where there is no pain, nor sorrow, nor sin. Jonathan could not meet his poor father there; Saul was gone to another, and a very sad place. But soon Jonathan would meet his dear friend David in Heaven; for Jonathan's Saviour was David's Saviour too.

The cruel Philistines cut off Saul's head, and took away his armour, and sent home the news of their victory, and shouted for joy. They nailed Saul's body to a wall; but the people who lived in Jabesh-gilead were kind to their king, and honoured him; and took his body, and his sons' bodies, and buried them all under a tree, and mourned for them many days.

Where was David now? He was still in Ziklag; waiting quietly there, and very thankful for God's kindness to him. After the battle, a messenger came to David from Saul's camp. His clothes were rent, and dust was upon his head; and David knew that he had sad news to tell. Then David asked, who had gained the battle, and what had happened to Saul and

Jonathan. The messenger said, "The people are fled from the battle, and many are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan are dead also." Then David asked how all this happened, and the messenger told him that he had seen Saul on Mount Gilboa in great distress, pursued by the Philistines, and that Saul had asked him to slay him, "So," the man said, "I stood on him, and slew him, and took his crown, and his bracelet; and I have brought them here to thee." Was this a true story? No, some of it was false. This man did not kill Saul; Saul killed himself. Why did the man tell this lie? Because he thought David would be glad to hear that his enemy Saul was dead; and perhaps would give him a reward. And was David pleased? No, he mourned and wept very much for Saul, and for his dear friend Jonathan; and he was very angry with the man who told him of their death. David thought the story was all true; so he commanded his servants to slay the man as a murderer. The man was an Amalekite; one of that wicked nation whom God had commanded to be destroyed. God punished him for his wicked lie, when David thought he was punishing him for murdering the king.

David mourned very much for Jonathan, and wrote a beautiful song of lamentation for him, for he could not forget Jonathan's love and kindness. But David remembered that Jonathan was now safe and happy in Heaven; and he knew when he died he should go there too, and see his dear friend, and never, never part from him again. And this comforted David in his sorrow.

END OF PART I.





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